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Select Esper to enlist.

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Details
Enlist
Back

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Mild Language
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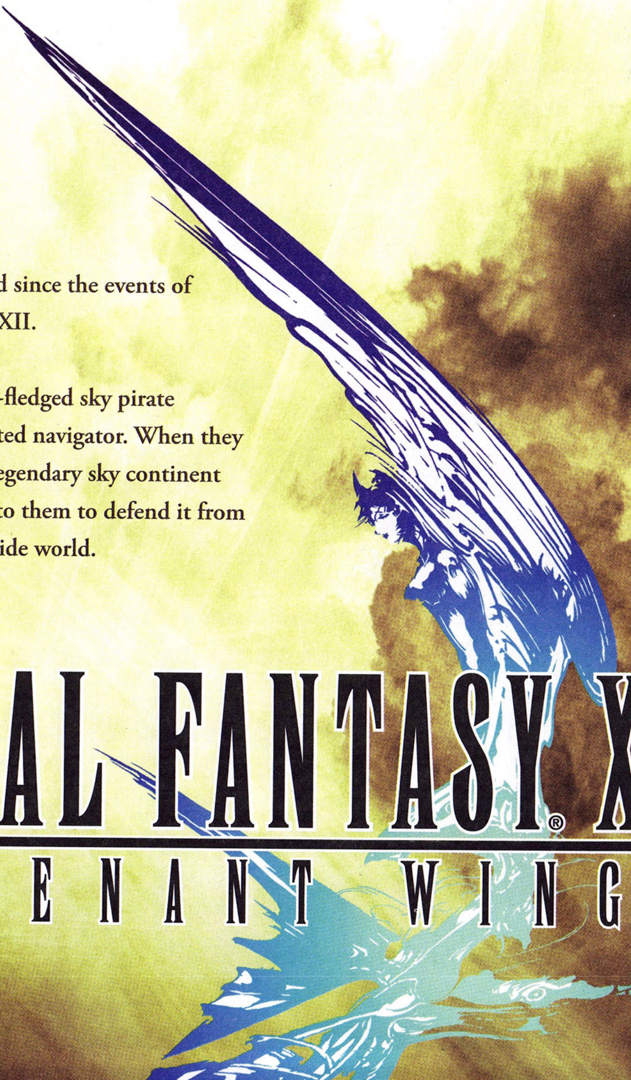

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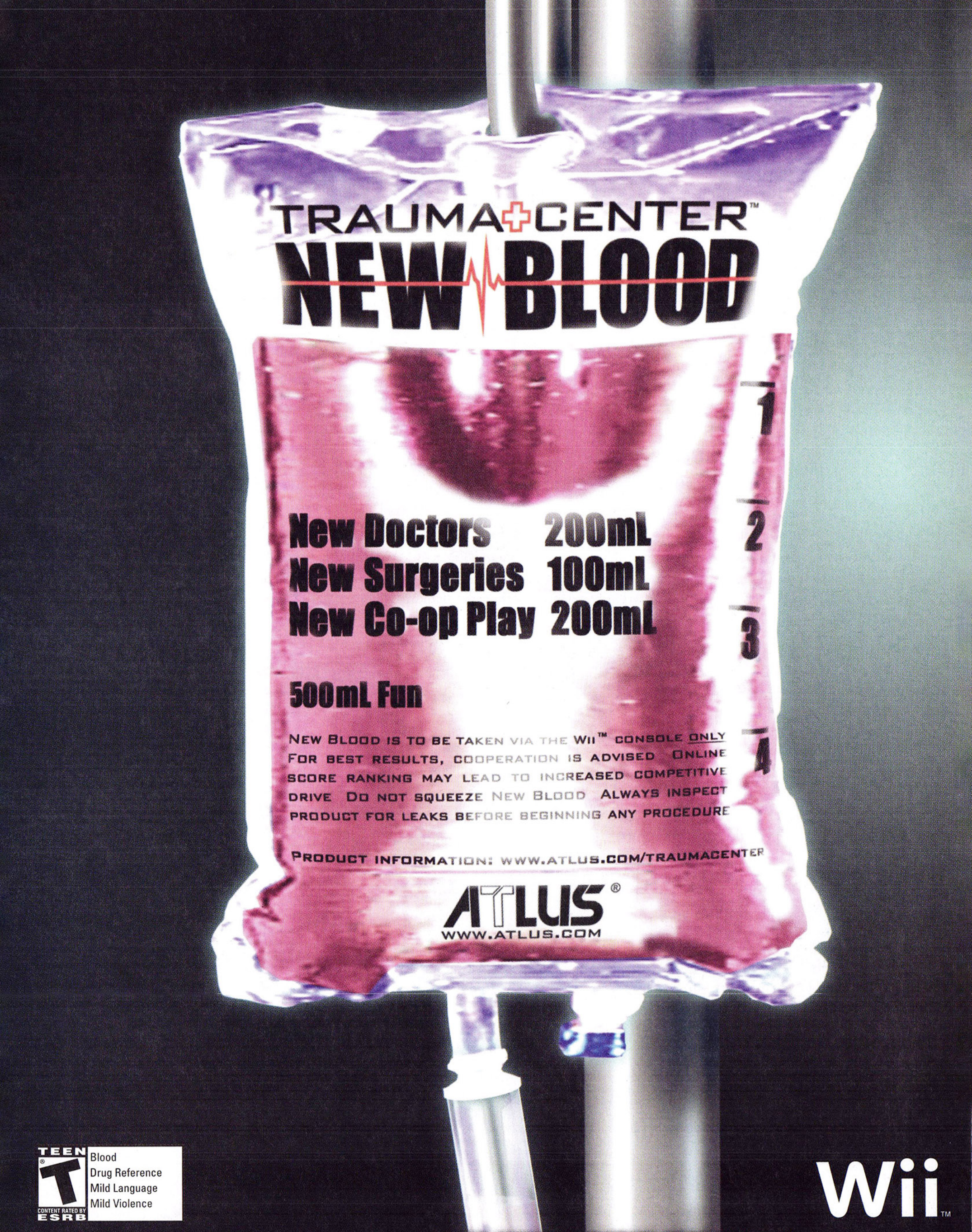

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Mild Language
Mild Violence

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NINTENDO POWER

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Somebody please tell us that we're not dreaming this.

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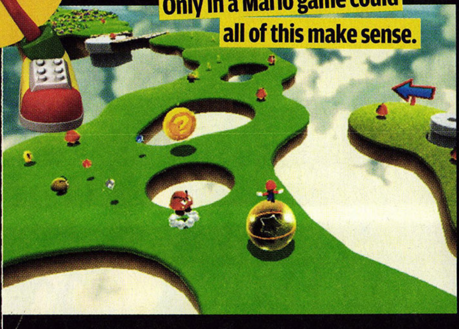
Call us crazy, but our money's on Sonic in this one.

LEGO shoes, activate!



Only in a Mario game could all of this make sense.

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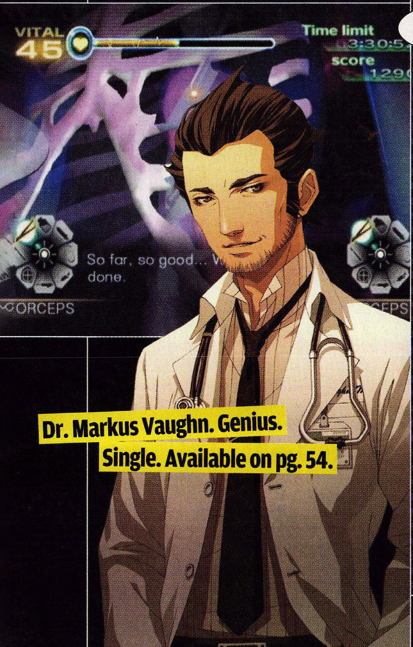
By now, you'd think that Goombas would run in the other direction.



Dr. Markus Vaughn. Genius. Single. Available on pg. 54.

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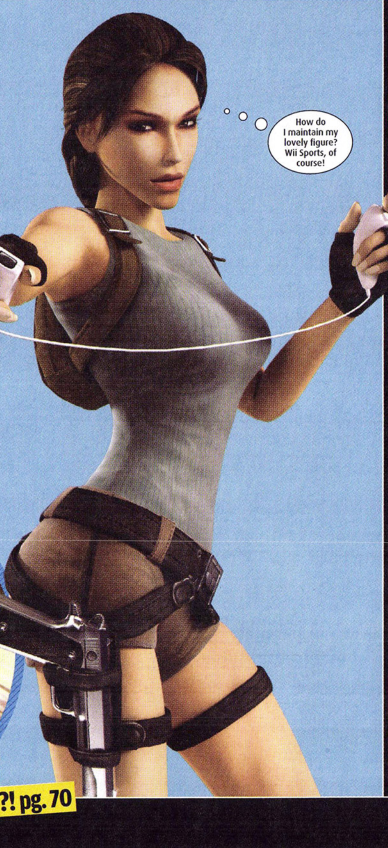

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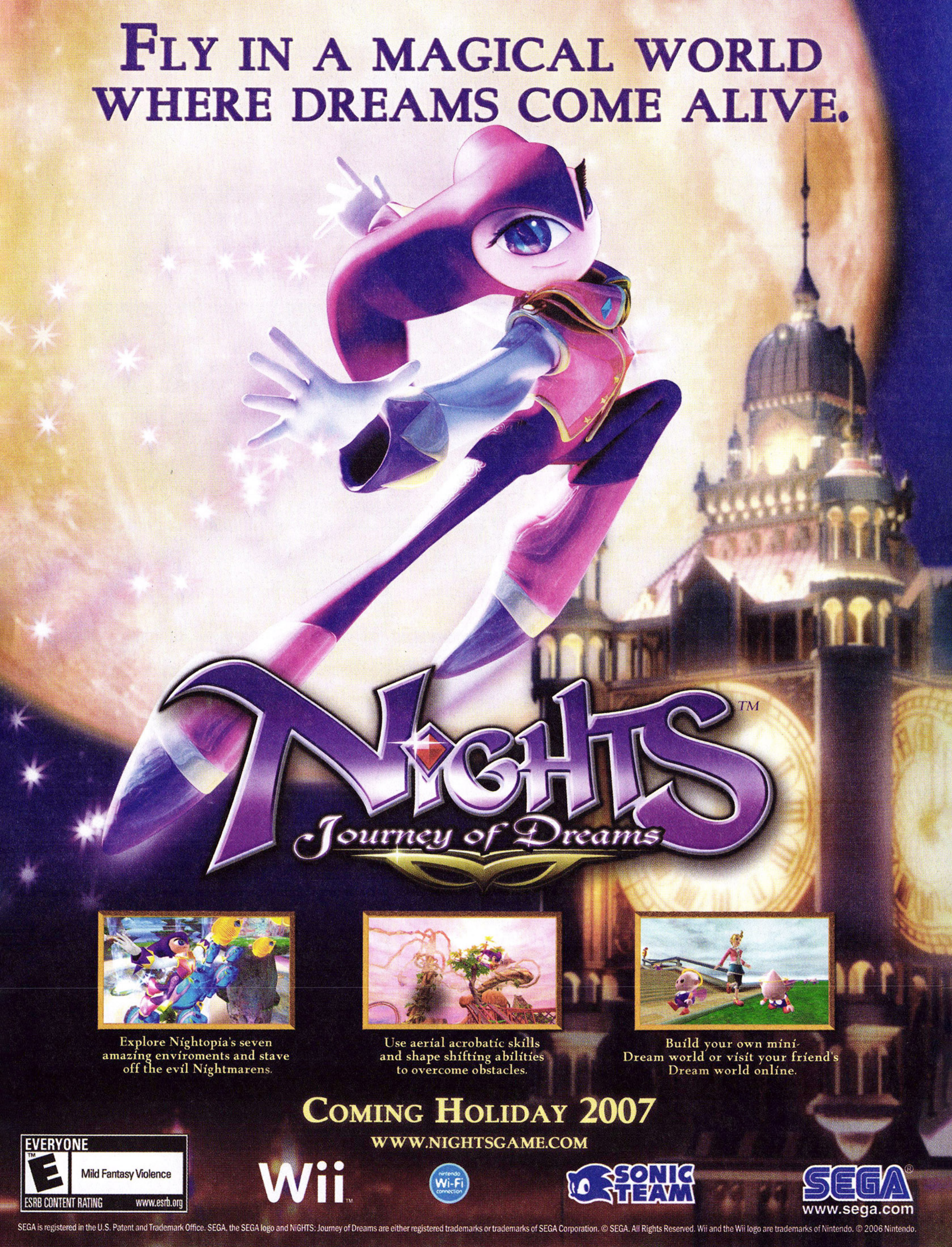

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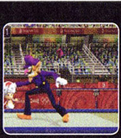
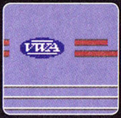
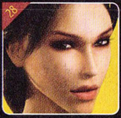
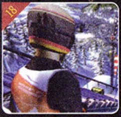
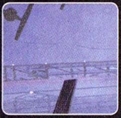
DS = Nintendo DS
NES = Nintendo Entertainment System
VC = Virtual Console
Wii = Wii





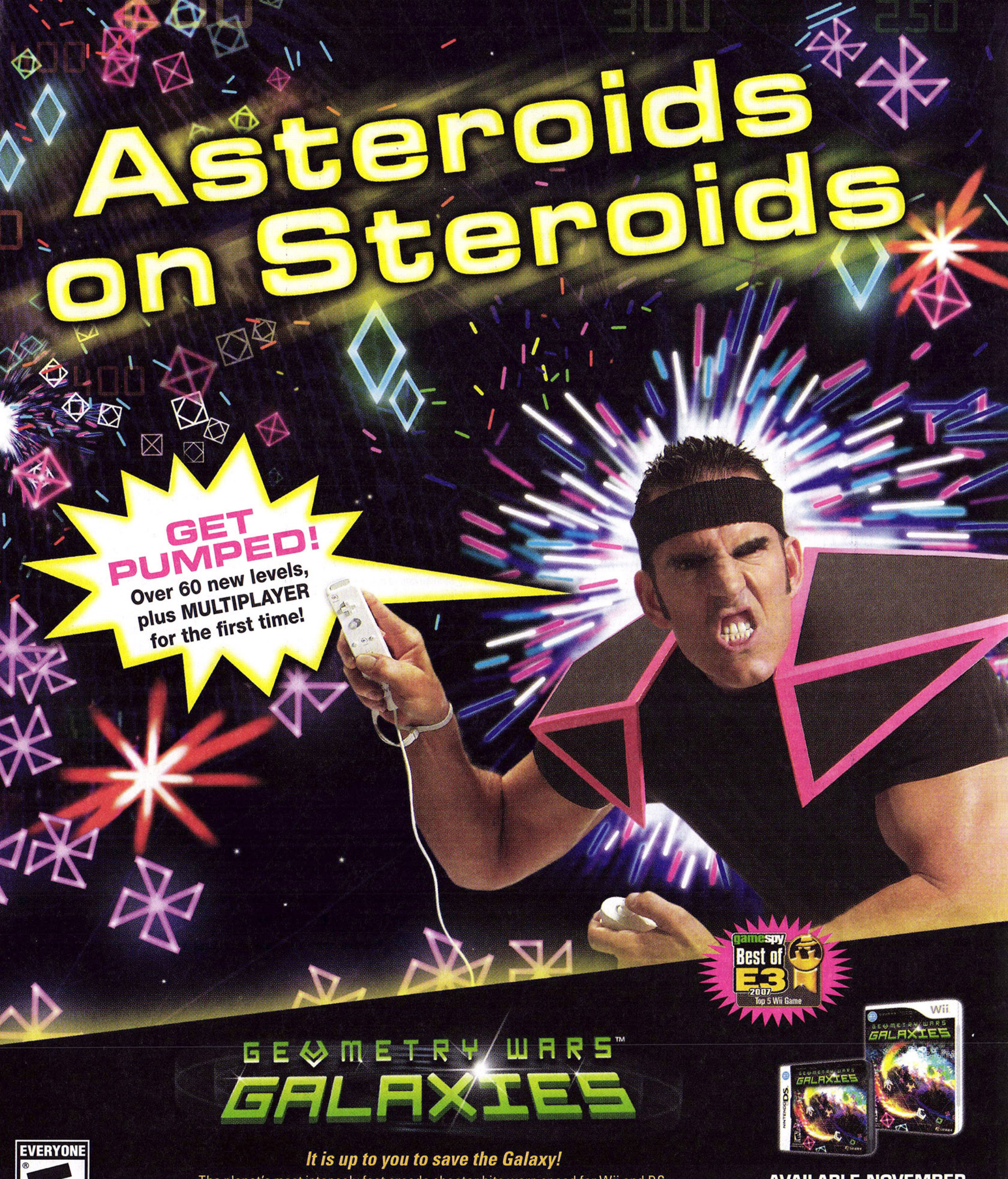






29
Which candle do you want to blow out?

34
Smarty Pants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Pulse

A NEW CHAPTER

What an amazing issue we've got for you this month! We don't mean to pat ourselves on the back, but our big new looks at Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Super Mario Galaxy, and Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games should get every Nintendo fan's pulse racing.

What's that? Who am I? Oh, right—introductions! My name is Chris Slate, and I'm the new Editor-In-Chief here at Nintendo Power. (Wow—I have to say, as a lifelong Nintendo fan and Power subscriber, just writing that sent chills up my spine.) I work for Future US, the world's biggest publisher of video game magazines and the new home of Nintendo Power. I've been lucky enough to manage other very successful game magazines, but I have to say that working on this one is by far the highlight of my career. Even when I'm working at 3:00 in the morning, editing pages with Mario on them always puts a smile on my face.

I have to say a great big "thank you" to Scott Pelland and the rest of the amazing team at Nintendo for their invaluable help, guidance, and continued dedication to making this magazine the absolute best it can be. We will continue to work very closely with Nintendo, and you'll still see many familiar faces within these pages along with a few new ones.

So, that's us—now I want to hear about *you* guys! Drop me a line as often as you can at pulse@futureus.com and tell me what you think of the magazine and what you'd like to see. Now, let's get this issue started!

Chris Slate
Editor-In-Chief

LETTERS

THE GOOD BOOKS

What are your guys' opinions on the use of strategy guides? I mean, you guys sell them and I see them on the shelves when I go to buy my issues of Nintendo Power. In my opinion, a strategy guide completely destroys the purpose of a game. The game's creators made it so that it would challenge you, not so that you have to read a book that tells you how to do it. Now, I know there are parts in games that take forever to figure out, but come on! The satisfaction you get after getting past that part is awesome. I feel bad for the people who use strategy guides. The game will never be the same for them as it was for a person who beat it without one.

Tristan
via the Internet

Seeing as how we put blood, sweat, and tears into the darn things, we're predisposed to like them. Anyway, getting stuck permanently in a game is arguably worse than having to use a book to figure out the answer.

Wii FORMATION

Do you guys think the new Wii Balance Board could be featured in more games? For example, for football games, you could run in place to move and use the Wii remote to throw. That could make the game really realistic. What do you think about this?

Nathaniel B.
via the Internet

We touched on some ideas in Volume 220's Writer's Block, and football is another great example. Running might not work, though—the Wii Balance Board works better when you are stationary.

NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH

When you guys say that a game is going to be released in the US, do you also mean that it will be released in Canada? I was reading Volume 220, and I came across an article that said, "Wii and DS titles based on Japan's hugely successful anime series are finally arriving on US shores." Does this mean that Canadian gamers are going to miss out on some new titles?

Curtis A.
via the Internet

Good question. Sometimes a game will be announced only for the United States. But considering that such games are few and far between, you probably have nothing to worry about.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

A few days ago I decided to try out a new thing that I saw on eBay (new to me, at least) called the U-Force for the NES. When I got it, it looked really cool. But when I finally tried it out I couldn't play it at all! I could move, but I couldn't control the movements because frankly I had no idea what to do. There's only one other gaming peripheral that has done something this bad to me—the LaserScope. It was a funky-looking headset that you wore that had a sensor in front of your left eye. You could see a crosshair (which wasn't steady at all) and you yelled "FIRE!" into a microphone. Not only could you not play Duck Hunt with that thing, you looked extremely stupid wearing it. Why did the NES have such terrible accessories?

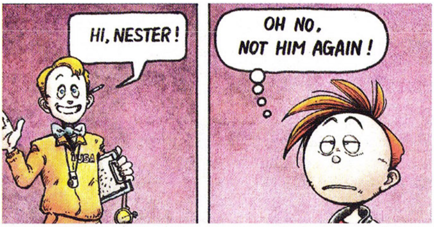
Mike S.
via the Internet

What can we say? It's old tech, but you can see where trying new things and pushing innovation pays off every time you pick up your Wii remote.

COMICAL COMEBACK?

I found a website with information on Howard & Nester and I want to see them again. Is it possible to bring them back? I mean, a lot of people would like them, and you'd get more subscribers.

Kevin K.
via the Internet


HI, NESTER!
USA
OH NO, NOT HIM AGAIN!

Bring back Howard & Nester? That makes sense; just give these guys their own column and watch the subscription cards flow in like a tidal wave.

UNDER REVIEW

As I'm trying to improve upon my review-writing methods, I was just curious about your own. When you folks work on a review, do you write your impressions in little bursts as you play? Or do you wait until you've finished the game before you type a word?

Utopianmachine
via the Internet

It's not a good idea to write as you go—you'll end up changing what you wrote once you've finished the game. Instead, take copious notes and study them before you write your actual review.

KART TOPPERS

Let me first say that it is incredibly rare for me to judge your opinions poorly. However, I feel that your "Best of E3" article, where Zack and Wiki placed a lowly 7, was an absolute joke. How could this charming and intuitive adventure game be bested by a 30-second clip of Mario Kart Wii? Horrible.

AlmightyMax
via the Internet

Well, we're pretty darn excited about Mario Kart Wii. Also, with the powerhouse E3 lineup, we could've put about six of the games in the #2 position and we wouldn't have felt bad about it.

LIFE SAVERS

As much as I loved The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess and Super Paper Mario, I couldn't help but notice that the difficulty level was a little under par. It is very easy to beat both games without dying, and I was never stuck for too long. You can imagine my relief when I played Metroid Prime 3. The game has a perfect difficulty level, and even the most hardcore of Metroid fans will, most likely, die at one point or another. We can only hope that Nintendo will continue this pattern with the upcoming lineup, as I would love a new, challenging Mario platformer.

Andrew
via the Internet

It's true; there seems to be a conscious shift toward making it harder to die in a game. We don't mind, actually—it means less time spent repeating portions of a game, and more emphasis on telling good stories. That said, Corruption is awesome.

UNCHRONICLED

I've been keeping a close watch on the progress of Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles, so I was really upset when I found out that Leon and Claire aren't going to be in it. I thought this game was being made to tell the story of the rise and fall of the Umbrella Corporation; how can they leave out two of the most important characters in the series? It's like trying to tell the history of the United States without mentioning George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—it just wouldn't make sense. Why couldn't they just leave out Carlos and Jill in the Resident Evil 3 scenario, instead? Resident Evil 2 had a bigger story than Resident Evil 3 and it introduced two new characters. Resident Evil 3 just had Jill again and a bunch of unimportant characters like Carlos. This game looked like it was going to be really awesome until they decided to leave out Leon and Claire.

Elisha B.
via the Internet

It's pretty surprising to us, too—Leon and Claire are both integral parts of RE's overall story. Cross your fingers for an Umbrella Chronicles sequel.

CONSOLE QUERIES

I was wondering if you knew if Secret of Mana was coming to Virtual Console anytime soon. I remember playing that game when I was around 4 or 5 years old and I didn't really care about the story. But now that I'm older I can probably get into the story much better (not to mention finish the entire game). I've never really liked turn-based RPGs, which I don't think Secret of Mana was. If I remember correctly, this game was really well made, and just great overall. Also, maybe you could revisit Secret of Mana in your Playback section, because I can imagine other people liked this game as much as I did. Any help you can give me about this would be appreciated. Thank you and keep up the good work.

Adam G.
via the Internet

You're memory serves you well—Secret of Mana was excellent, indeed. Square Enix hasn't announced plans to launch any of their titles on the Virtual Console, so you'll have to wait (or dig out your SNES).

Hey guys, I was wondering: Where's Mega Man 64 on the Virtual Console? That was the greatest game I have ever played. Will Nintendo be putting it on the Virtual Console, or do I have to bribe someone with cookies?

Gabriel M.
via the Internet

If that was the greatest game you've ever played, can we suggest you try, oh . . . every other Mega Man game that was ever made? At any rate, we haven't heard a release date for Mega Man 64 yet.

BUY PLENTY OF NITROS

I go to public school and ride the bus. My bus has what you'd call a driver, but she can't drive at all. In two weeks she has driven over about 25 curbs, almost crashed into a telephone pole and a stop sign, hit another bus, and run over a trash can. I think this kind of driving could be a game for the Wii. It could be a game like Off Road Challenge except you drive a bus.

Joseph K.
via the Internet

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUMS

Why did Nintendo close down the Nsider Forums? I mean, couldn't it have stayed up while the Nintendo site was being overhauled? Or would that be too much work for NOA Andy and the rest of the gang? I've spent quite a lot of time on the forums, making friends, getting involved with discussions, and just having a good time. It was the only place to discuss Nintendo candidly.

Tyler B.
via the Internet

With the Nintendo forums closing, what reason do many Nintendo fans have to visit the Nintendo website? Where else are we going to go to talk about Nintendo? This has to be one of the worst ideas Nintendo has had since not making Metroid Prime Corruption Wi-Fi. The forums are what convinced me to buy most of my Virtual Console games and many more games. What's next? Taking away our Nintendo Wi-Fi stats? Sure, the forum had its flaws, like not being able to trade friend codes, but it was a great place to spend hours talking to people who like Nintendo as much as I do.

TerryJr91
via the Internet

I'm terribly disappointed that the executives at Nintendo decided to close down the forums. To be frank, the Community page in Nintendo Power is really going to feel its effects. Could you guys explain how are we supposed to submit fan art, Nsider reviews, and that kind of stuff so that it can be incorporated into the Community section?

Roundhouse_Kick
via the Internet

We share a lot of the same concerns as you do. Nintendo Power is in the process of making its website a better destination for the Nintendo-based community, so keep reading over the next few months. Regarding correspondence to Pulse and Community, turn the page.

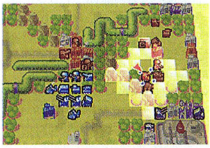
CHALLENGE != FUN

I'd like to ask you if you know of any good RPG and strategy games for beginners that I could look up. My brothers have suggested different games to me, but I try them and I guess I just can't handle it. There are probably other people like me but don't have the courage to admit that they're new to the gaming world. I'm not new or old to it, just most of the time I'm watching rather than playing, and I thought it was about time I tried to seriously finish a game. I only own a DS, but my brother owns a Wii, along with about every other game system on the planet.

Presto1995
via the Internet

RPGs almost always have pretty steep learning curves, but we can recommend a few DS games that ease you in slowly enough that you won't freak out:

Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time for DS mixes classic platforming with painless action-oriented RPG battles.



Get a taste for tactics titles with Advance Wars: Dual Strike. Gameplay elements are introduced one at a time, and the modern setting is intuitive.

CRANIDOS Lv14
BUDEW Lv11
30/32

It's super effective!

Despite their rap for being for the younger set, the Pokémon games—like the recent Diamond and Pearl—are surprisingly involved and fun. The games are also a lot less hokey than the cartoon makes the franchise out to be.

TIME TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOKS!

As everyone knows by now, exciting changes are happening at Nintendo Power. And while we're going through some major adjustments around here, it means that our readers will have to make a few minor ones, too. Chris Slate, our new Editor In Chief, has expressed how much he appreciates the kind of dialog that sections like Pulse and Community enable between you and us. To make sure that we keep receiving all of the smart, silly, and downright absurd correspondence that you send us, be sure to send your Pulse letters to pulse@futureus.com. For traditional mail (yes, we still accept it!), check out the address at the end of the page.

THE GAME-NAME GAME

Hey NP. [Super Smash Bros. Brawl developer] Sakurai said on smashbros.com that "Nobody will know your name" during Wi-Fi play. I know that Nintendo puts serious emphasis on not giving out personal information, but does that mean that I won't even be able to log onto Wi-Fi with a four-letter screen name that appears above my character's head? Secondly, I'm worried about the pace of the game. He said that the farther you are from the person that you're playing against, the slower the pace will be. I know that he means that the game could lag while playing online. I understand this entirely, but do you think that they are building the game to be at least as fast-paced as Melee, if not faster and more intense? It'd be a disappointment if the game was slower paced.

Daniel L.
via the Internet

Lag is pretty much inevitable in Wi-Fi gaming, but we're sure they're doing everything they can to limit it. As for your four-letter tag, you'll probably still be able to have one, as long as you choose your four letters carefully . . .

FEMME FATALE

I have been wondering why Nintendo hasn't made any evil princess characters. I thought a perfect opportunity was missed when Peach got her own game—she could've fought an evil version of herself instead of fighting Bowser. I know Bowser kidnapped her enough times that she was well within her rights to kick his butt for once, but come on! There are plenty of female gamers out there, and let's face it—women make great bad guys. I just hope they can fix this soon, and give us some evil chicks to love or hate.

Renee R.
via the Internet

LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD!

Why isn't there a Wii headset yet? Even the DS has a headset. It's not like this is an impossible feat. Since the Wii remote works via Bluetooth, maybe you could use Bluetooth headsets like mobile phones. You could also put a transmitter in the USB port that could use the DS's wireless headset. Or, you could put an adapter that plugs into the bottom of the Wii remote that has another port at the bottom so you could still plug in your nunchuk. Many games such as Brawl or Medal of Honor Heroes could really benefit from the ability to talk with people; otherwise the online feature is tarnished. Where's the fun in an online game if you can't make fun of someone when you beat them?

Levi B.
via the Internet

While taunting like you describe is precisely what we hate about headsets, they're definitely good for co-op games. Hopefully Nintendo is already developing such a device for the next wave of Wi-Fi titles.

EVEN MORE CORRUPT

It may or may not be an error, but you failed to include all of the upgrades past the Hyper Missile, such as the final grapple upgrade, the X-Ray visor, the Hazard Shield, the Spider Ball, and the other Energy Tanks. I'm a little disappointed in you guys. You didn't include any Ship Missile expansions either.

Anonymous118
via the Internet

Our strategy articles are intended to help get you on your way, not to serve as complete walkthroughs—that kind of detail requires an entire strategy guide. (Take that, Tristan!)

MORNING GLORY

In Volume 221, you referred to Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn, when it is actually called Fire Emblem: Goddess of Dawn. I have seen this mistake on the Internet and I'm wondering why it keeps being made. I would like to think that it's Chris Shepperd's fault.

Ian M.
via the Internet

It's definitely Chris's fault, but for once he's actually correct (he assembles the Power Charts lists). Goddess of Dawn is the literal translation of the game's Japanese title, but Radiant Dawn is the official English name.

THERE'S A STATUTE ON THESE, YOU KNOW

I caught two mistakes in Nintendo Power. In Volume 187's Pulse, you said that the color of your mini-Yoshi is random, when really it depends on which file you pick. Secondly, in Volume 195 in the article "Smash Planet" you said you could pick up the Pokémon Voltorb when really the Pokémon is an Electrode (a Voltorb has red on the top and white on the bottom and Electrode is vice versa).

Patch S.
via the Internet

Gee, thanks. We'll be sure to make a note of those errors in our microfiche archives.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I am a big fan of the Dragon Quest franchise, so when I saw two articles concerning Dragon Quest in Volume 221 I was thrilled. I happened to notice after reading the Power Profiles interview with Yuji Horii that there was a mistake in the Gameography section. It shows a screenshot of Dragon Warrior 4 stating that it was made for SNES. Dragon Quest 4 was actually made for the original NES. I just thought I should point that out. Anyways, I have been reading Nintendo Power for many years and think you guys put together a great magazine each month. Keep up the good work, folks.

Andy T.
via the Internet

You said in your review of Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party that you couldn't turn off the gimmick arrows and the hand arrows but, in fact, you can. It's in the menu when you're choosing a song. It turns them all into normal arrows.

Eva
via the Internet

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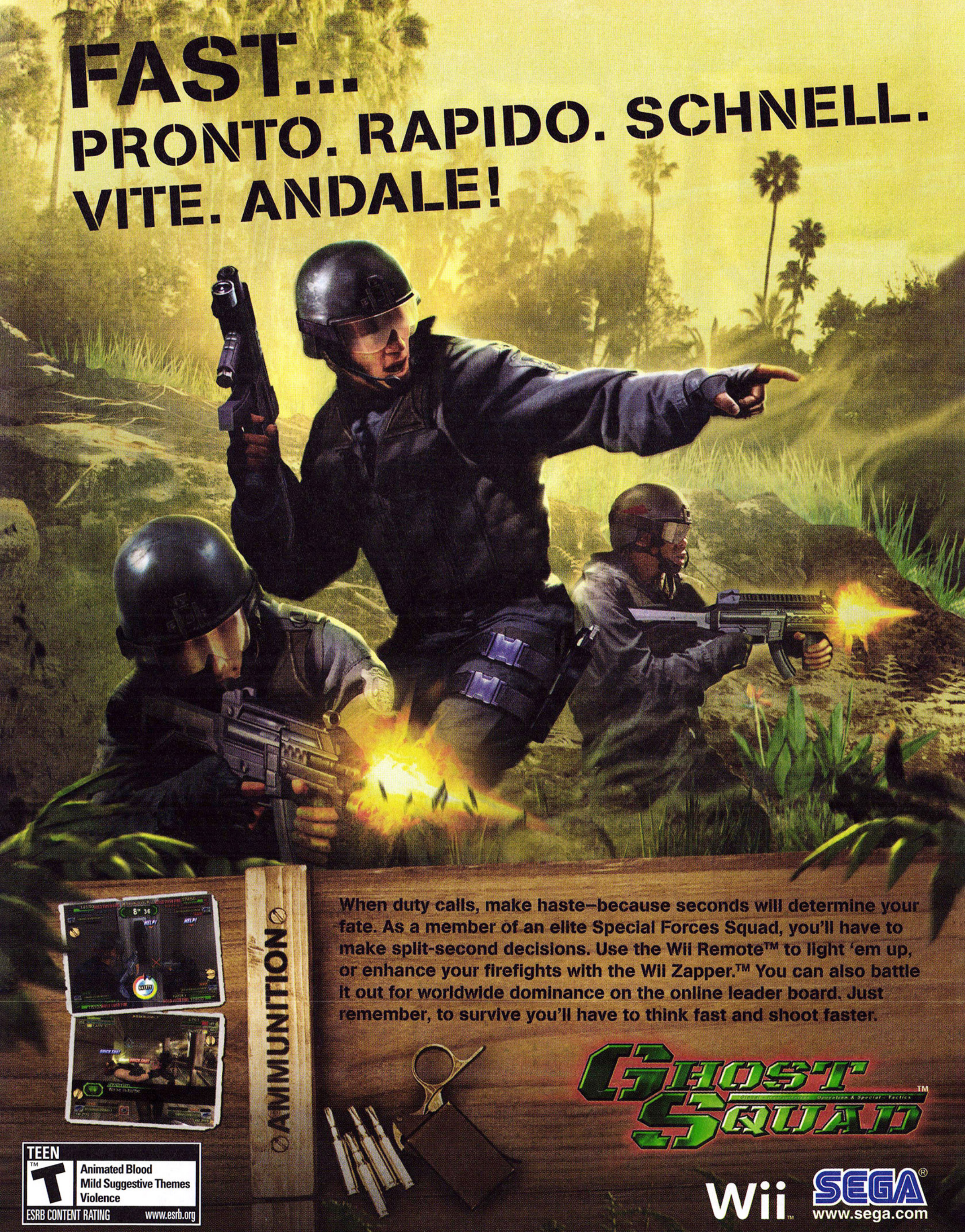
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Big in Japan

Third-party publishers unveil a smorgasbord of new Wii and DS titles at Japan's biggest video game event of the year, Tokyo Game Show.

Every September, thousands of gamers converge on the Makuhari Messe Convention Center in Chiba prefecture for Tokyo Game Show. Quite a few exciting Wii and DS titles made their debut at this year's event and we've got the full report. —Steve T.

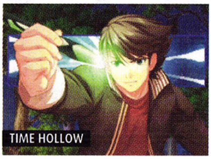
Kingdom Hearts: 358/2 Days

It's been rumored for months, but Square Enix finally made it official: Kingdom Hearts is coming to DS. This all-new installment in the popular Disney-meets-Final-Fantasy franchise will take place between the first and second Kingdom Hearts titles (released for PlayStation 2), and focus not on Sora and friends, but rather Roxas and the mysterious Organization XIII. The game is fully 3-D, and looks to feature a real-time battle system similar to its predecessors. A first for the series, however, is a four-player co-op mode. Oh, and if you're wondering about that title, Square Enix claims it's deliberately cryptic, and that players will understand its meaning once they complete the game.

The rumors are true: Kingdom Hearts is coming to DS!

Time Hollow

On the morning of his 17th birthday, high-school student Horo Tokio awakes to find himself in an alternate timeline in which his parents have been missing for 12 years. By observing flashbacks, investigating for clues, and "digging holes" into the past with the Hollow Pen, it's up to you to change events and solve the mystery of this point-and-click DS adventure game from Konami. Time Hollow is the latest from director Junko Kawano, who explored similar themes in the underappreciated PS2 title Shadow of Destiny.


TIME HOLLOW

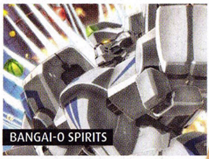
King Story

Originally announced as Project O a few months ago, King Story boasts a highly touted development staff that includes folks who worked on Harvest Moon, Final Fantasy XII, and Dragon Quest VIII. The game stars a timid young boy who unexpectedly becomes king, and mixes elements of town-building with real-time strategy. Another key element seems to be a quirky sense of humor, as signified by a Don Quixote-style knight who rides around on a cow. King Story will be published in Japan by Marvelous Interactive. A North American publisher has yet to be announced.

KING STORY

Bangai-O Spirits

The latest from famed developer Treasure is a DS-exclusive follow-up to cult-classic shooter Bangai-O. Following in the frenzied footsteps of its predecessor, Bangai-O Spirits arms you with a crazy assortment of weapons capable of firing hundreds of projectiles at once. And should your appetite for destruction prove insatiable, the game includes a fairly robust level editor. Though it's been announced in Japan only, Treasure is currently in discussions to bring Bangai-O Spirits to the US. For more with the developer, be sure to check out our interview on page 64.


BANGAI-O SPIRITS

Blue Dragon

Mistwalker (the studio founded by the father of Final Fantasy, Hironobu Sakaguchi) announced that its Xbox 360 RPG Blue Dragon is headed to the DS in some form. Details remain pretty much nonexistent at this point, so we don't know if it will be a remake of the original or an all-new installment. Rest assured we'll be keeping a close eye on this one.

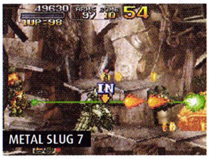
ACTIVE LIFE: ATHLETIC WORLD

Active Life: Athletic World

Twenty years ago Bandai released Family Fitness Fun: Athletic World for use with the NES's Power Pad. At TGS, Namco Bandai announced Active Life: Athletic World for Wii, which you'll play using a custom mat peripheral. Coincidence? We don't know. But we do know that Athletic World will feature 10 events such as rowing and navigating an obstacle course in which you (and your friends, if you play the game in multiplayer mode) will control the action with both your feet and the Wii remote.

Metal Slug 7

The run-and-gun shooting action of Metal Slug has been going strong for ages (as exemplified by last year's Metal Slug Anthology on Wii), and the latest installment is aimed squarely at the Nintendo DS. SNK Playmore hasn't revealed a lot of details about the game, but you can expect more of what's made the series so successful: plentiful weapon power-ups, loads of enemies, and vehicles like the reliable Metal Slug tank.


METAL SLUG 7

The King of Fighters Collection: The Orochi Saga

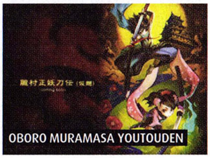
Three of the earliest King of Fighters games—KOF '95, '96, and '97—are coming to Wii on a single disc in The King of Fighters Collection: The Orochi Saga. The trio of fighting games features a plethora of characters and special moves, along with elimination-style team-based battles. KOF '96 and '97 have yet to be released on home consoles in North America (aside from SNK's original NeoGeo versions), so we're looking forward to a domestic release (which we hear will be in 2008).

Samurai Shodown Anthology

Way before anyone was facing off in sword-to-sword combat in Soulcalibur, Samurai Shodown was the definitive weapons-based fighting series. SNK hasn't announced which games will be included in Samurai Shodown Anthology for Wii, but with more than five titles released for the NeoGeo hardware (and several lesser-known games available as well), there's plenty of 2-D hack-and-slash combat ripe for the picking.

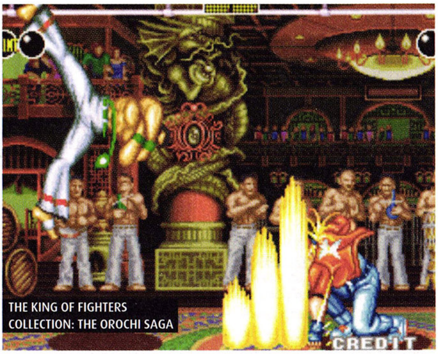
Oboro Muramasa Youtouden

Independent developer Vanillaware has gained considerable notoriety of late for its efforts to revitalize 2-D gaming, most famously with the PlayStation 2 action-RPG Odin Sphere. The studio's next project is a 2-D fighter for Wii. The game was shown only in video form at TGS, but the hand-drawn visuals were absolutely stunning. No word yet on a US release.


OBORO MURAMASA YOUTOUDEN

Mysterious Dungeon: Shiren the Wanderer

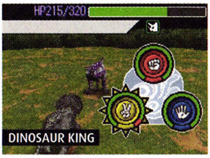
Shiren the Wanderer is a DS remake of a popular dungeon crawler originally released for the Super Famicom in Japan (the game never made it stateside). Developed by ChunSoft (the folks responsible for Pokémon Mystery Dungeon), it takes players through randomly generated dungeons on a quest to find the legendary city of El Dorado. Enhancements for the DS version include new territories, revamped graphics and sound, and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection support. Sega will release the game in the US next winter.



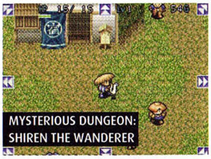
THE KING OF FIGHTERS COLLECTION: THE OROCHI SAGA

Dinosaur King

First you collect, then you fight! No, it's not Pokémon—it's Sega's Dinosaur King for DS. Playing as "the D-Team" of Max or Rex, players will collect more than 100 dinosaurs by digging up fossils found in five regions around the globe, then use more than 240 special attacks to battle the forces of an evil scientist named Dr. Z. Geez—didn't people learn anything from Jurassic Park?



DINOSAUR KING


MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON: SHIREN THE WANDERER

Front Mission 2089: Border of Madness

Square Enix revealed that the next installment in its popular mech strategy series will be Front Mission 2089: Border of Madness for DS. No specifics have been revealed, but the Front Mission 2089 moniker has previously been attached to a series of cell phone games in Japan. As such, we suspect this is either a port or a spin-off of some sort.

We Love Golf

Camelot, the development team behind the original Hot Shots Golf and the Mario Golf series, returns to the links with We Love Golf. A collaboration with publisher Capcom, the Wii title promises a realistic golf experience with the cartoonish flair that Camelot is known for. We Love Golf will feature the Wii remote for the club-swinging motion, allowing subtle adjustments during your shot to apply fades and draws with a flick of the wrist. Look for the game to arrive in North America sometime in 2008.

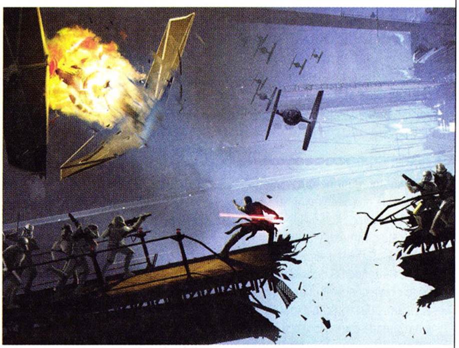
HAN SHOT FIRST

The Force is with Wii

Vader haters rejoice—A special Wii edition of *Star Wars:* The Force Unleashed is on the way! Many Bothans died to bring us this information.

LucasArts has announced a special Wii version of *Star Wars:* The Force Unleashed, the game that has already caused more buzz than any other *Star Wars* title in years. It's called "Force Unleashed" because players can control the force in just about any way they want to, from throwing a Stormtrooper across a room to pulling a Star Destroyer down from the heavens. What about the Wii version makes it special? The developers are adding an extra mode that will allow players to engage in head-to-head duels to decide who the true Jedi Master is, once and for all.

Will this be the long-rumored Wii remote/lightsaber game that fans have been dying for? LucasArts won't say, but we're sure that we won't have to wait until the game's Spring release to find out more. —Andy S.



Now *this* is why the Jedi don't need to carry blasters!

Wii GO BOOM

The Fuse is Lit

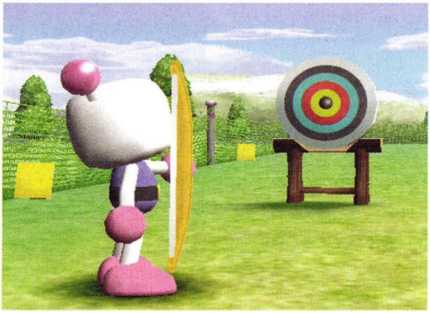
With Bomberman Land, the classic multiplayer series kicks the party into high gear with an explosive number of minigames.

It was only a matter of time before Bomberman made his Wii debut, and boy does it look like a blast! (See what I did there? Anyone? . . . Um, yeah.)

Bomberman Land for the Wii is looking like it's going to be loaded with fun. There will be a whopping 50-plus minigames, so everyone at your Bomberman party should find something they like. (Hey, I know I can't be the only one throwing these parties! . . . Right?) And if your friends happen to find white and pink a tacky color combination, you can tell 'em that their Bomberman's look is fully customizable from head to toe.

If rolling with a four-player bomber posse isn't your style, the game has you covered with the Adventure mode where it's your job to figure out what tore Bomberman Land into four pieces (our guess would be bombs). Also, the original Bomberman Battle game is included as an added bonus, with new maps and power-ups added to spice up an old favorite.

The game hits in January, so get your group ready! —Andy S.



What creep would tell a guy with balls for hands to fire an arrow?

SNOW DAY

Curling, Yes!

Prefer your sports covered in snow? Winter Sports 2008 has you covered.

If you're sometimes a couch potato like me, then chances are good that you've caught curling on ESPN in the middle of the day and ended up watching it for hours. And then you really want to try it even though you know very little about the sport, but the local skating rink keeps kicking you out for sliding large objects across their floor during business hours. Hey, no need to be embarrassed—we've all been there.

Thankfully, our time has finally come. Winter Sports 2008: The Ultimate Challenge will let people like us live out our fantasies, and we won't even have to leave the couch. Along with curling, the game also includes alpine skiing, ski jumping, bobsleigh, luge, skeleton, speed skating, cross country skiing, and figure skating (I know what I'm doing after curling)! You can compete with up to four people, so call me over and we'll go for the gold together when the game releases this November. —Andy S.

No Mario or Sonic in this one, but there *is* a bear. Let's name him . . . Curly.

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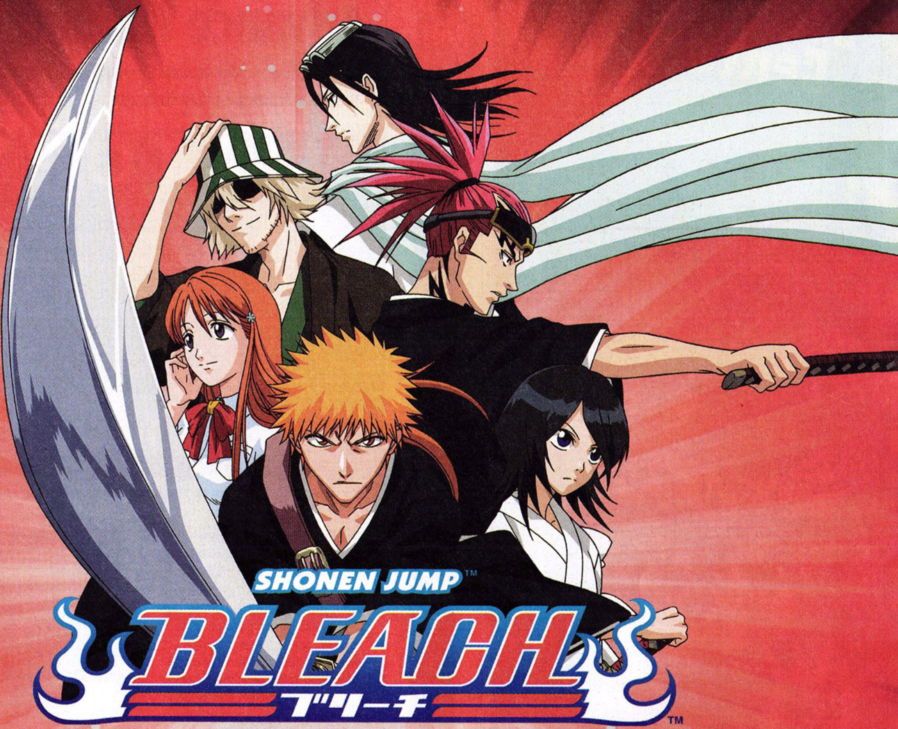

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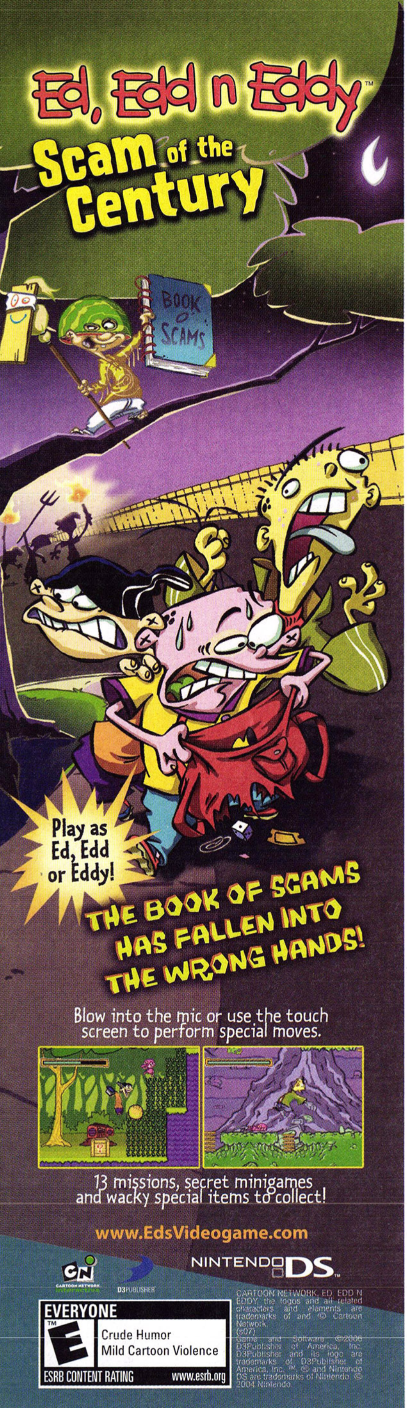
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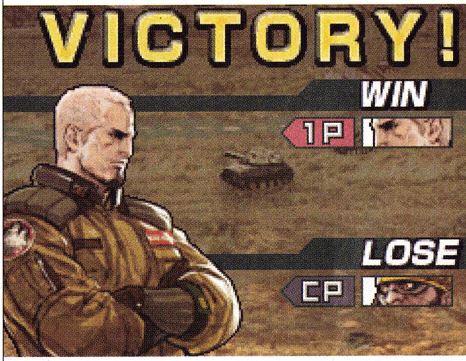
YOUR TURN

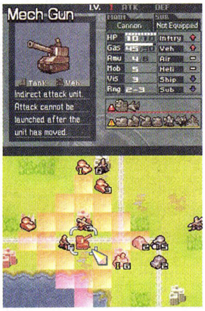
Advance Warning

Nintendo's brilliant Advance Wars series returns to DS in early 2008 with the most ambitious game in the series so far.

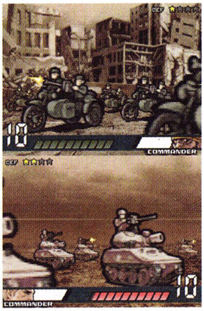


Meteorites have nearly finished Earth, and there's a war on. It's been a bad day.

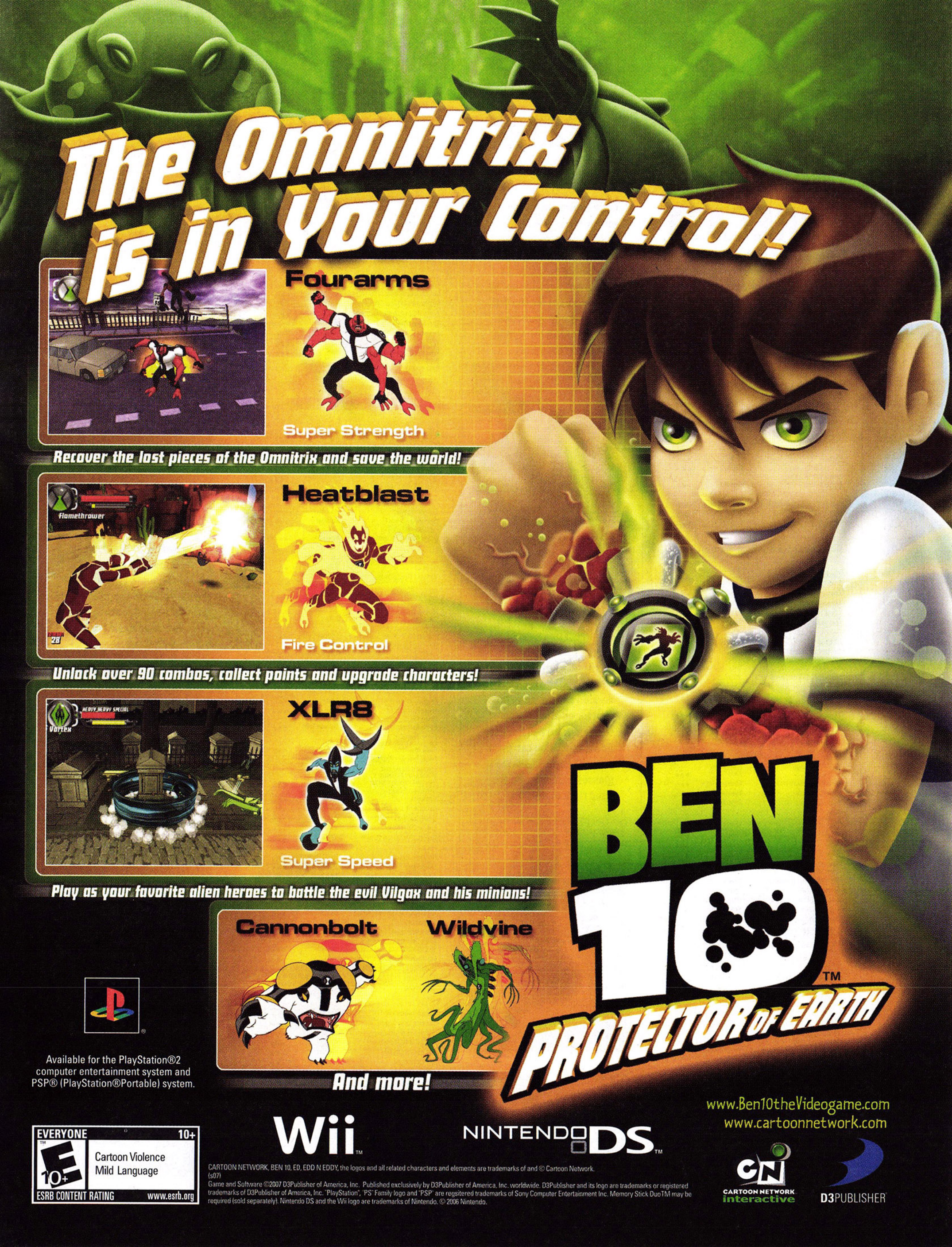
Imagine that meteorites have bombarded Earth, nearly wiping out civilization; scattered survivors pick through the wreckage under ashen skies, and the remnants of two military superpowers patrol the devastation, one faction protecting the innocent while the other preys upon them. Instead of the happy-go-lucky, cartoonish campaigns of previous Advance Wars games, Advance Wars: Day of Ruin offers up a bleak background with gritty, manga-inspired characters and animations. But far from depressing, the new look for the series is coupled with features that will make this the best Advance Wars ever. Chief among them is the ability to battle other commanders via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Multiplayer options have always been strong in the AW franchise, but with instant access to opponents online you'll never have to wait for a friend to show up. As always, the single-player story mode is extensive, and you'll face a wide range of scenarios as you progress in the game. Once you've completed the main sequence, you'll have additional challenges, including multiplayer options and a map editor to create your own scenarios. With Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn debuting this month and Advance Wars girding for battle in late January 2008, Intelligent Systems (which developed both titles) is definitely on a roll. —Scott P.



Indirect attack unit. Attack cannot be launched after the unit has moved.



"Global war" usually doesn't sound so good, but we're all for Wi-Fi play.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GAME WATCH FORECAST

Now that we're at the Holiday hump, the new game announcements are slowing down. On the plus side, many of the titles that we've been looking forward to all year are nearly ready, so it's all good.

● Announced
● In Development
● Ready for Release

GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	●●●
GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	🔴🔴🔴 —New games added to the list

Wii

Game Title	Publisher	Status
Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None	The Adventure Company	●●○
Alone in the Dark	Atari	🔴○○
Alvin and the Chipmunks	Warner	●●○
AMF Bowling Pinbusters	Bethesda	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender: The Burning Earth	THQ	●●○
Backyard Football	Atari	●●○
Bee Movie Game	Activision	●●○
Ben 10: Protector of Earth	D3PA	🔴🔴○
Blast Works: Build, Fuse & Destroy	Majesco	●●○
Bleach: Shattered Blade	Sega	●●●
Blitz: The League	Midway	●●○
Brothers in Arms: Double Time	Ubisoft	●●○
Bully: Scholarship Edition	Rockstar	🔴🔴○
Cabella's Monster Bass	Activision	●●●
Cars: Mater-National	THQ	●●○
Catz 2007	Ubisoft	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	Disney	🔴🔴○
Civilization: Revolution	2K Games	●○○
Code Lyoko: Quest for Infinity	The Game Factory	🔴🔴○
Cooking Mama 2: Dinner with Friends	Majesco	●○○
Cosmic Family	Ubisoft	●●●
Cranium Kabookii	Ubisoft	●●○
Cruis'n	Midway	●●○
CSI: Hard Evidence	Ubisoft	●●○
Dancing with the Stars	Activision	🔴🔴🔴
de Blob	THQ	●●○
Destiny of Zorro	TBD	●●○
Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed	THQ	●●○
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	●●○
Dogz 2007	Ubisoft	●●○
Draglade	Atlus	🔴🔴🔴
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 3	Atari	●●●
Dragon Blade: Wrath of Fire	D3PA	●●○
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Square Enix	●●○
EA Playground	Electronic Arts	●●●
Emergency Mayhem	Codemasters	●●○
Endless Ocean	Nintendo	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	●●○
Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn	Nintendo	●●●
Furu Furu Park	Majesco	●●●
Game Party	Midway	●○○
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●●
George of the Jungle	Crave	●●●
Ghost Squad	Sega	●●●
Godzilla: Unleashed	Atari	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●●○
Harvest Moon Wii*	Natsume	●●○
Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law	Capcom	●●●
High School Musical: Sing It!	Disney Int.	●●●
History Channel: Battle for the Pacific	Activision	🔴🔴○
Indianapolis Legends 500	Destineer	●●●
Indoor Sports	Konami	🔴🔴○
Iron Man	Sega	●●○
Jenga	Atari	●●●
Kidz Sports: International Soccer	Destineer	🔴🔴○
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	Warner Bros.	●○○
LEGO Indiana Jones: The Video Game	LucasArts	🔴🔴○
LEGO *Star Wars*: The Complete Saga	LucasArts	●●●
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Link's Crossbow Training	Nintendo	●●●
London Taxi: Rush Hour	Activision	🔴🔴○
Mario Kart Wii*	Nintendo	🔴🔴○
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Sega	●●●
Medal of Honor Heroes 2	Electronic Arts	●●●
Monster Lab	Eidos	🔴○○
Mushroom Men	Gamecock	●○○
MX vs. ATV Untamed	THQ	●●○
Monster Truck Offroad	Destineer	🔴🔴○
My Word Coach	Ubisoft	●●●
Mythmakers: Orbs of Doom	Destineer	🔴🔴○
Need for Speed ProStreet	Electronic Arts	●●●
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams	Sega	●●○
Nitrobike	Ubisoft	●●○
No More Heroes	Ubisoft	●●○
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●○
Opoona	Koei	●●○
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	Crave	●●○
Project H.A.M.M.E.R.	Nintendo	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2	Ubisoft	●●●
Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles	Capcom	●●●
Rig Racer	Destineer	🔴🔴○
Rygar: Battle of Argus	Tecmo	🔴🔴○
Samba de Amigo*	Sega	●○○
Samurai Warriors Katana	Koei	●●○
Smarty Pants*	Electronic Arts	●●●
Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity	Sega	🔴🔴○
Soulcalibur Legends	Namco Bandai	●●●
Space Station Tycoon	Namco Bandai	🔴🔴○
Speed Racer	Warner Bros.	🔴○○
SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis	THQ	●●○
Star Trek: Conquest	Bethesda	●●○
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	LucasArts	🔴🔴○
Super Mario Galaxy	Nintendo	●●○
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	Nintendo	●●○
Super Swing Golf Season 2	Tecmo	●●○
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	Eidos	●●○
Top Spin Tennis*	2K Sports	●○○
Trauma Center: New Blood	Atlus	●●●
Wii Fit	Nintendo	●●○
Worms: A Space Oddity	THQ	●●○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●●

NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	Status
Advance Wars: Day of Ruin	Nintendo	🔴🔴○
Alvin and the Chipmunks	Brash Ent.	🔴🔴○
American Girl: Julie Finds a Way	THQ	🔴🔴🔴
Avatar: The Last Airbender—The Burning Earth	THQ	●●○
Bee Movie Game	Activision	●●○
California Games	System 3	●●○
Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	Activision	●●●
Cars: Mater-National	THQ	●●●
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	Disney	🔴🔴○
Chronos Twin	Lexicon	●●○
Contra 4	Konami	●●●
Cooking Mama 2: Dinner with Friends	Majesco	●●●
CSI: Dark Motives	Ubisoft	🔴🔴○
CSI: Miami Nights	Ubisoft	🔴○○
de Blob	THQ	●○○
Di-Gata Defenders	The Game Factory	●●○
Disciples II	Strategy First	🔴🔴○
Disney Friends	Disney	🔴🔴○
Draglade	Atlus	●●○
Dragon Quest IX: Protectors of the Sky	Square Enix	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker	Square Enix	●●●
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Eco Creatures: Save the Forest	Majesco	🔴🔴○
Enchanted	Disney Int.	●●●
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●●○
Final Fantasy IV	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings	Square Enix	●●●
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Tactics A2	Square Enix	●●○
Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends: Imagination Invasion	Midway	●●●
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●●
George of the Jungle	Crave	●●○
Godzilla Unleashed	Atari	●●●
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
GoPets: Vacation Island	Konami	●●○
Harvest Moon DS 2	Natsume	🔴○○
Homie Rollerz	Destineer	●●○
Horse Life	D3PA	●●●
Imagine Figure Skater	Ubisoft	●●○
Impossible Mission	System 3	●●●
LEGO Indiana Jones: The Video Game	LucasArts	●●○
Indianapolis 500 Legends	Destineer	●●○
Insecticide	Gamecock	●●○
It's a Wonderful World	Square Enix	●●○
John Deere: Harvest in the Heartland	Destineer	●●●
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ	●●●
Kurupoto: Cool Cool Stars	UFO	●●●
Labyrinth	UFO Interactive	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Sega	🔴🔴○
Mario Party DS	Nintendo	●●●
Master of Illusion	Nintendo	●●●
Mushroom Men	Gamecock	●○○
MX vs. ATV Untamed	THQ	●●○
My French Coach	Ubisoft	●●●
My Life Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
My Spanish Coach	Ubisoft	●●●
My Word Coach	Ubisoft	●●●
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	Tecmo	●●○
Ninjatown	Southpeak	●○○
Nintendo Crossword*	Nintendo	🔴○○
Ontamarama	Atlus	●●○
Orcs & Elves	Electronic Arts	●●●
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Konami	●●○
Professor Layton and The Curious Village	Nintendo	●●○
Ratatouille: Food Frenzy	THQ	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2	Ubisoft	●●●
River King: Mystic Valley	Natsume	●●○
The Simpsons	Electronic Arts	●●○
Smart Kids' Gameclub	UFO	●●●
Solitaire Overload	Telegames	●●○
Sonic RPG*	Sega	●○○
Spectrobes II	Disney	🔴○○
Speed Racer	Waner Bros.	🔴○○
SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis	THQ	●●○
Spy-Q	Eidos	●●○
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	LucasArts	●○○
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody: Circle of Spies	Disney Int.	●●●
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Mortal Kombat	Midway	●●●
Viva Piñata	Microsoft	●●○
Warhammer 40K: Squad Command	THQ	●●●
Wild Petz: Tigerz	Ubisoft	●●○
WordJong	Destineer	●●●
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●●
Zoo Tycoon 2	THQ	●●○

*Tentative title

BITS OF TID

Cracking the Code on Wii

Code Lyoko introduces new types of Wii control.

Code Lyoko: Quest for Infinity won't be the first game based on the top-rated TV show, but it may be the best thanks to a surprising number of cool new uses for the Wii remote. Keep your eyes peeled for the intriguing title this November.

DS Gets its Groove On

Boogie is getting a second shot at stardom on the Nintendo DS.

While we scored the Wii version of Boogie a 5.5, we're cautiously optimistic about the series' chances on the DS. This version will be made for shorter on-the-go play sessions, and will have 10 minigames. You can even play the game in 3-D using glasses that come packaged right in the box.

Next Year's Top New Game Still Hush-Hush

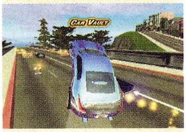
Mario Kart Wii still silently on track for "early 2008."

The only news to report is that there really *isn't* anything new on the next Mario Kart—but that isn't altogether a bad thing. 2008 is almost here and the game is still targeted for release early in the year. We could be Karting online before too long!

Lay Back and Cruise

The arcade hit that helped launch the N64 is reborn in November.

All of the crazy, over-the-top high-flying racing that you remember is coming back full throttle this month in Midway's simply titled Cruis'n. Will the action be even nuttier with the Wii remote? We'll soon find out!



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Wii Channels

Retro gaming gets even hotter

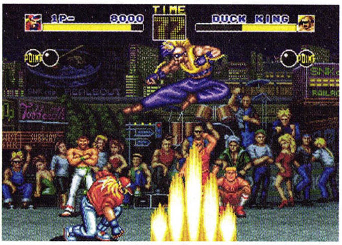
Big news this month as two new systems are added to Virtual Console, and previously import-only games appear on our side of the Pacific.

2 MORE FOR VC

At long last, Turbo CD and NeoGeo games are coming to Virtual Console! No specific Turbo CD titles had been announced at press time, but we can tell you that the first wave of NeoGeo releases will include fighting and action games like Fatal Fury, World Heroes, Art of Fighting, and Magician Lord. These bad boys will sell for 900 Wii Points apiece, and more games will be announced in the months to come.

Hey, if anyone from Konami is reading this, could you please—*pretty* please—make Dracula X one of the first Turbo CD titles? This rare gem is one of the best Castlevania games ever, and since it's only recently been made available outside of Japan, most fans here haven't had a chance to play it yet.

And SNK, we'll be counting the days until we can download Samurai Shodown—don't keep us waiting!

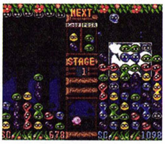


The NeoGeo was home to a long line of amazing fighting games, including classic series like Fatal Fury, Art of Fighting, and Samurai Shodown.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

WHAT'S NEW IN RETRO GAMING!

11
Games

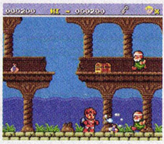


KIRBY'S AVALANCHE

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1995**

WHAT: Very similar to another Virtual Console puzzler, Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine, Kirby's Avalanche is a fast-paced blob- and block-dropping game.

WHY: This is a fun Tetris-style stacking game, especially when dropping blob "Avalanches" on a friend.



LEGEND OF HERO TONMA

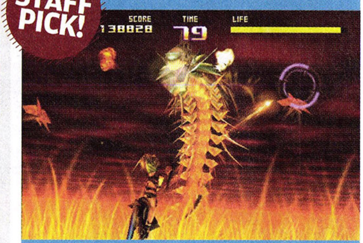
PLATFORM: **TURBOGRAFX16**
PUBLISHER: **IREM**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1993**

WHAT: The makers of R-Type deliver an intensely challenging side-scrolling action/platformer in a unique fantasy world setting.

WHY: The steep difficulty curve (you die after just one hit) and reflex-heavy gameplay represent classic gaming at its purest.

STAFF PICK!

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



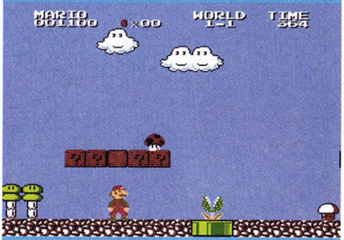
SIN AND PUNISHMENT

PLATFORM: **N64**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **2000**

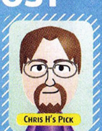
CHRIS S's PICK

Originally a Japan-only title from cult-favorite developer Treasure (see our interview with the studio on page 64), this frantic rail-shooter has finally made its US debut. It plays kind of like StarFox 64, only the character runs instead of flies. Give it a shot and see what hardcore fans have been buzzing about for years.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



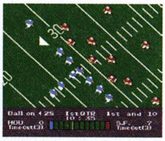
SUPER MARIO BROS: THE LOST LEVELS



PLATFORM: **NES (FAMICOM)**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1986**

STAFF PICK!

A quick history lesson: the game known in North America as Super Mario Bros. 2 wasn't the *original* Super Mario Bros. 2. The true SMB2 was much more like the first SMB, only a lot tougher. While the game eventually crossed the Pacific in a couple of forms, now you can finally experience it in its original 8-bit glory—if you're up to the substantial challenge.

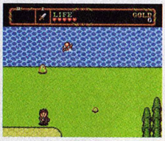


NES PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL

PLATFORM: **NES**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1990**

WHAT: At a time when the video game gridiron was ruled by Tecmo Bowl, NES Play Action Football offered a fresh approach with its angled, overhead view and simulation-style gameplay.

WHY: It's so sim-heavy that you even have to rest your players, and there's no slowdown (a strong point for a NES sports game).

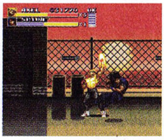


NEUTOPIA II

PLATFORM: **TURBOGRAFX16**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**

WHAT: Following the first Neutopia's VC debut by only a few weeks, the sequel offers more of the same Zelda-style top-down adventuring and dungeon exploring.

WHY: It might not be as good as the series it shamelessly emulates, but Neutopia II provides a decent fantasy quest nonetheless.

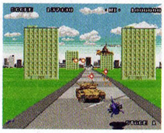


STREETS OF RAGE 3

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

WHAT: In the third game in Sega's series of Streets of Rage beat-'em-ups, you'll punch out lots of thugs on the way to destroying Mr. X's robot imposters.

WHY: Even though it features a disappointing soundtrack and a weird combo system, the co-op brawling remains somewhat satisfying.

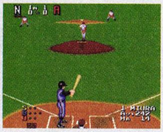


SUPER THUNDER BLADE

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1989**

WHAT: Climb into the cockpit of a superadvanced helicopter and lay waste to legions of enemy copters, tanks, and other vehicles.

WHY: A mix of overhead and first-person 3-D stages brings some diversity to the nonstop shooting. Games like this were the forefathers to modern 3-D shooters.



WORLD CLASS BASEBALL

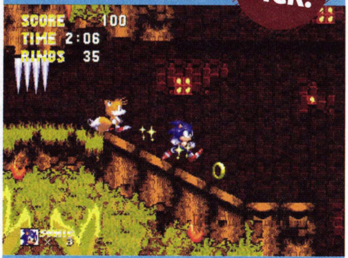
PLATFORM: **TURBOGRAFX16**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1989**

WHAT: Customize your team, play a friend, go after the league and world championships, or simply kick back and watch a game of hardball.

WHY: The definitive baseball game on the TurboGrafx16, World Class Baseball is easy to pick up and play, with just enough modes and depth to keep you hooked.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

STAFF PICK!



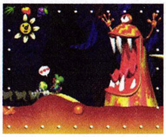
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3

CHRIS S'S PICK

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

Dr. Eggman is collecting all of the Chaos Emeralds in order to rebuild his Death Egg, and for some reason, Sonic and his sidekick Tails have a problem with that. I mean, really—can't a guy just build his Death Egg in peace?

This third chapter in Sonic's adventures marks the first appearance of series mainstay Knuckles the Echidna, plus all of the fast-paced action that fans love.



YOSHI'S STORY

PLATFORM: **N64**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1998**

WHAT: Baby Bowser has turned the world into a living picture book, and so the Yoshis set out to put things right again in this short-'n-sweet action game.

WHY: Often dismissed by fans of the much more challenging Yoshi's Island, there's actually a lot to like about this game when viewed as the younger kid's title that it really is.

WHOSE TEAM ARE YOU ON?

Table Tennis
TEAM MARIO
100m
TEAM MARIO
Fencing
TEAM MARIO

20 authentic Olympic events featuring three modes of play.

Fantastic unlockable stages including 10,000 meter diving and more.

Take your own Mii™ into the action.

Does Mario red run in your veins? Or are you a true-blue Sonic fan? The match-up the world's been waiting for will finally happen at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. 20 different events mean 20 different Wii Remote™ moves to master. What's in the cards for your team? Suit up and find out.

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii™

NINTENDO DS™

COMING FEBRUARY 2008.

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IN STORES NOVEMBER 20
Archery
TEAM SONIC
Aquatics
TEAM SONIC
Hammer Throw
TEAM SONIC
Wii
OFFICIAL VIDEO GAME
Wi-Fi
Beijing 2008
MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES
EVERYONE
E
ESRB
SEGA
Published by
SEGA
WWW.SEGA.COM/MARIOSONIC
OFFICIAL VIDEO GAME

Short pants, smarty pants, fancy pants, and no pants—can you guess which game has which?

Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors Pg. 30
Endless Ocean Pg. 31
Godzilla Unleashed Pg. 34
Master of Illusion Pg. 29
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams Pg. 30
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 Pg. 32
Smarty Pants Pg. 34
Tomb Raider: Anniversary Pg. 28
Ultimate Mortal Kombat Pg. 32

Happy Anniversary

>TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Eidos
DEVELOPER: Crystal Dynamics • RELEASE: Nov. 2007

When I think of Tomb Raider, I tend to think of running and gunning. Granted, puzzles eventually come to mind, but for me at least, they're an afterthought. That all changed when I had a chance to get my hands dirty with the new Wii-enhanced version of Tomb Raider: Anniversary.

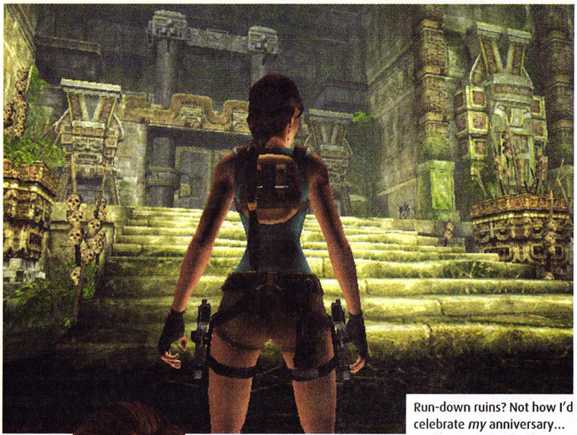
Having played previous Tomb Raider games on other consoles, I was excited to get the opportunity to play the classic series in a whole new way, and I wasn't disappointed. From the opening scenes, the new Wii control proved intuitive. By the time the tutorial was over, putting Lara through her paces felt like second nature.

Running and gunning with the Wii remote and nunchuk is a blast—it really makes you feel like you are a part of the game. During a fight with a pack of wolves, I could quickly flick my wrist to dodge their attacks while simultaneously targeting them with the Wii remote. Simply navigating the environments is also very immersive. While flicking the Wii remote up and down to swing back and forth across a chasm, I caught myself swaying along with the action onscreen, I suppose to make sure that I got that extra edge that I needed to clear the gap.

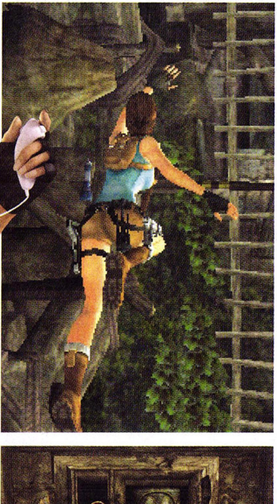
The action is fun, but the control scheme really shines while you're working out puzzles. For example, you can move the Wii remote left and right to make charcoal rubbings of clues, or twist portions of a pillar by grabbing them with an onscreen hand icon. It's clear that the developers put a lot of effort into making sure that the game made good use of the Wii.

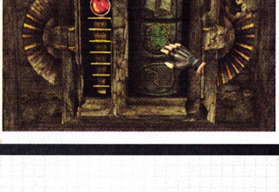
Anniversary's graphics upgrade over the original PlayStation version almost makes it feel like a brand-new game. Several times, rooms that I had buzzed through back in the day stopped me dead in my tracks and compelled me to take a second look. In one instance, what was once a slightly darkened room with an obvious exit had become a beautiful area filled with crumbling rocks and beams of light that cut through fog.

When Anniversary hits stores in November, you'll see this franchise in a whole new way. With an innovative control scheme, breathtaking visuals, and classic Tomb Raider gameplay, you're sure to fall for Lara all over again. —Andy S.



Run-down ruins? Not how I'd celebrate *my* anniversary...





Magic Act

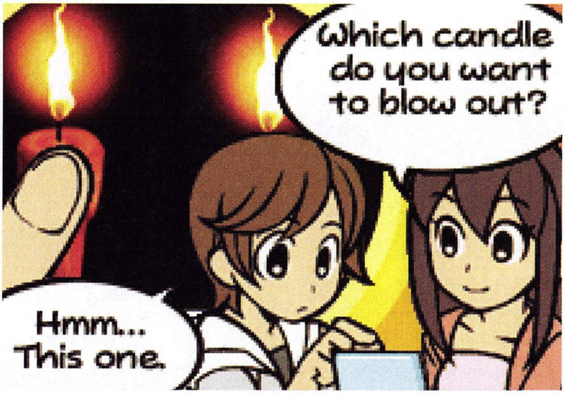
>MASTER OF ILLUSION

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO/TENYO • RELEASE: NOV. 2007

Master of Illusion isn't so much a game as it is a cool toy. It teaches you how to perform 14 magic tricks using the various capabilities of the DS, and some of them are pretty darn convincing. One of our favorites has your audience draw a pair of eyes on the DS touch screen, then place a coin above, below, to the left, or to the right of the handheld. When the person is finished, you'll command the DS (via the microphone) to look, and the eyes will gaze in the direction of the coin. How does it work? A magician never reveals his secrets (even under the threat of beatings from his coworkers). Some of the tricks require a special deck of playing cards, which comes included with the software.

Master of Illusion also offers a selection of simple minigames, as well as tricks that the DS can perform by itself (a few of which may lead you to believe that your handheld has been possessed). But the main attraction is definitely the opportunity to put on a show for your friends and family. —STEVE T.

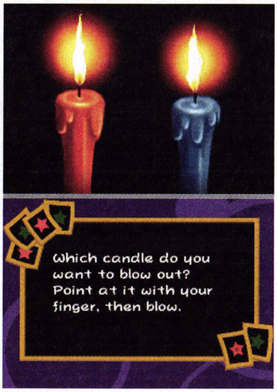
Pull this out at parties and wow the crowd—just remember your hat and cape.



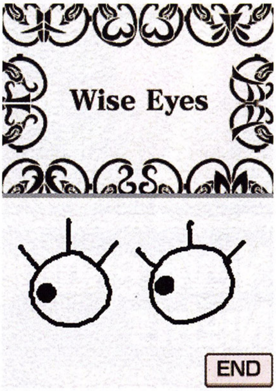
Which candle do you want to blow out?

Hmm... This one.

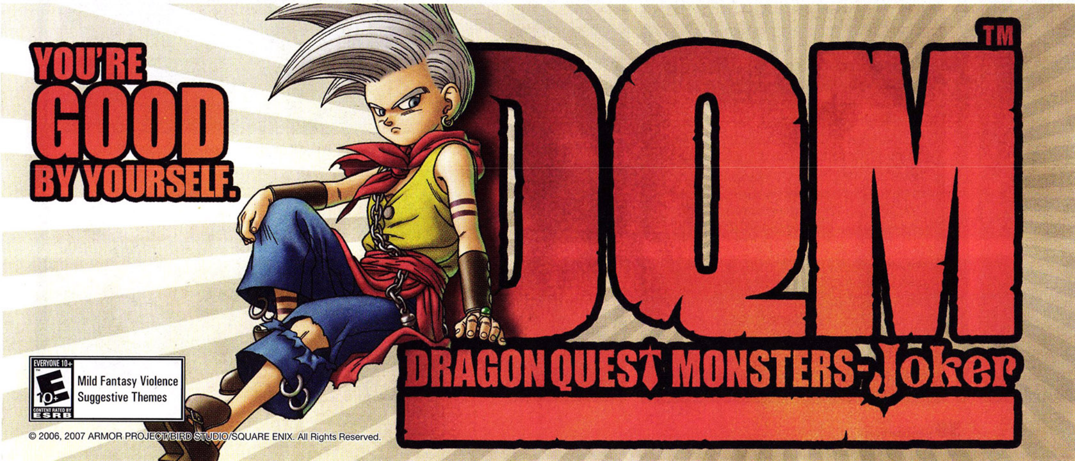
Puppy training, brain improvement, and now magic lessons? DS, what *can't* we learn from you?



Which candle do you want to blow out? Point at it with your finger, then blow.



Wise Eyes



EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes
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A New Quest

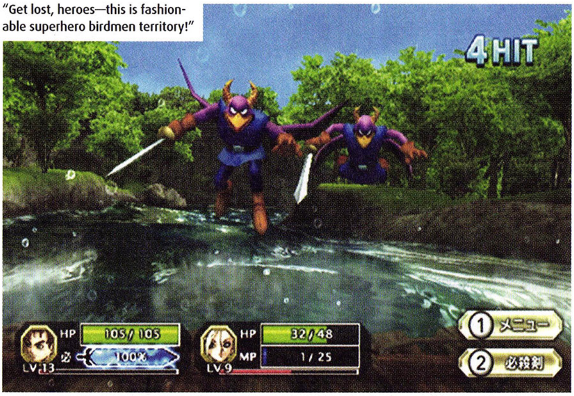
>DRAGON QUEST SWORDS: THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: GENIUS SONORITY • RELEASE: 2008

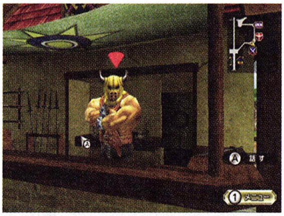
While Dragon Quest is better known for its epic 80-hour RPGs, the series' first Wii title takes a more lighthearted, hack-and-slash approach.

After tackling the first few levels of the Japanese version, we're starting to enjoy the subtle complexity of the battle system. When enemies are near enough to swipe at, you have only a split second to decide where to put the focus of your sword attack; for example, if a string of close enemies lines up vertically on the right side, your best action is to place your targeting spot on the right side, then swipe vertically to knock them all out at once. Your shield plays a key role, as well—monsters not only rush you to attack, but they also fire projectiles that you can block. When the going gets tough, you can unleash powerful magic to hit all the enemies at once.

We can't wait to get our hands on an English version so that we can get a better understanding of the game's many smaller details. —CHRIS SH.



"Get lost, heroes—this is fashionable superhero birdmen territory!"



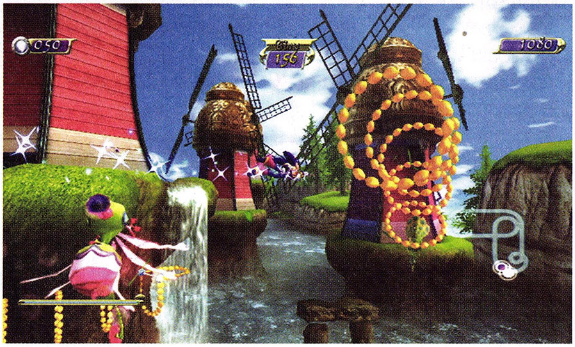
Neverending Nights

>NiGHTS: JOURNEY OF DREAMS

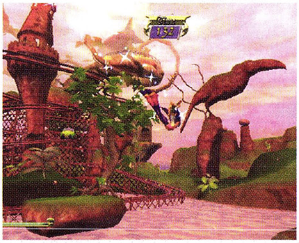
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA • RELEASE: DECEMBER 2007

We know, we know—we've previewed NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams so many times now that you'd think Sega's been sending hundred-dollar bills with every new screenshot. While we can't confirm or deny that, we can say that we've finally gotten some hands-on time with the high-flying sequel, and the game is shaping up wonderfully.

Like the Saturn original, Journey of Dreams lets you fly through imaginative dream-based levels as the whimsical jester named NiGHTS. When you're swooping, looping, and diving with the analog stick (either using the nunchuk or the Classic controller), the game feels very much like its 32-bit predecessor; alternatively, you can opt for remote-only control and guide NiGHTS by pointing with a cursor. Creative bosses, vehicle stages, and on-foot levels provide additional depth. The game should be a dream come true as long as Sega manages to give it a consistent frame rate. —CHRIS H.



The world of NiGHTS is a super-happy pastel paradise. When it does rain, it probably rains Skittles.



Paradise Found

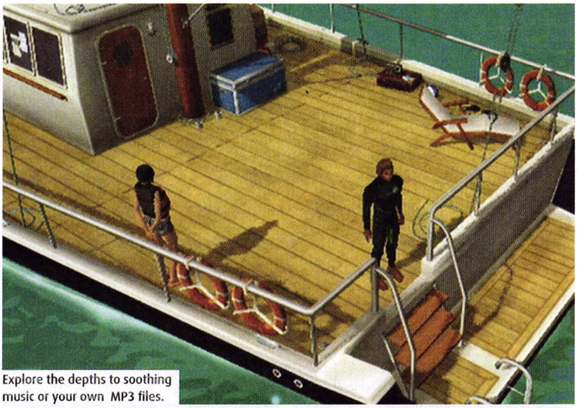
>ENDLESS OCEAN

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Arika • RELEASE: Winter 2008

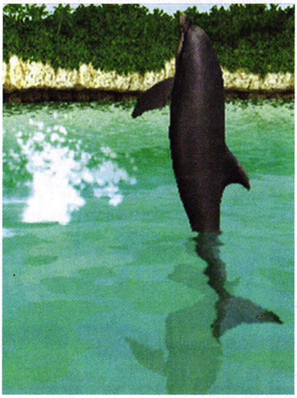
Endless Ocean for Wii is less a game than a hypnotic journey beneath tropical waves. Scuba diving is mesmerizing enough in reality, but when you're gliding among digital coral reefs, reaching out to stroke colorful angelfish while soothing music drifts over you, all while you're dry and parked on your comfy sofa, you'll experience a completely unique rapture of the deep. Navigating through Neptune's realm is a simple matter of guiding the onscreen cursor and pushing the B Button on the remote. Examining fish, petting them, feeding them, and checking your air supply are about the most taxing activities you face. No shark attacks or moray-eel melees. Guaranteed.

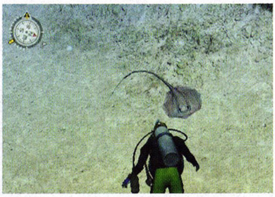
If blissing out in an octopus's garden isn't enough for you, there are various tasks you can perform, such as guiding tourist divers and collecting info for your shipmate, Katherine, who (oddly enough) is studying the sea but refuses to set fin in it. By focusing on a specimen, you'll gain knowledge in the form of a data readout, so eventually you'll fill in an undersea encyclopedia. Of course, even in paradise people need to earn a living—and justify the fact that the Marianas Foundation has essentially given them a dive boat to live on. As time goes by, you'll visit more areas and receive new equipment options. You'll also be able to use the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection Gate to go diving with a friend.

There is nothing in the world quite like Endless Ocean, but we'll all have to hold our breath until early 2008. —Scott P.

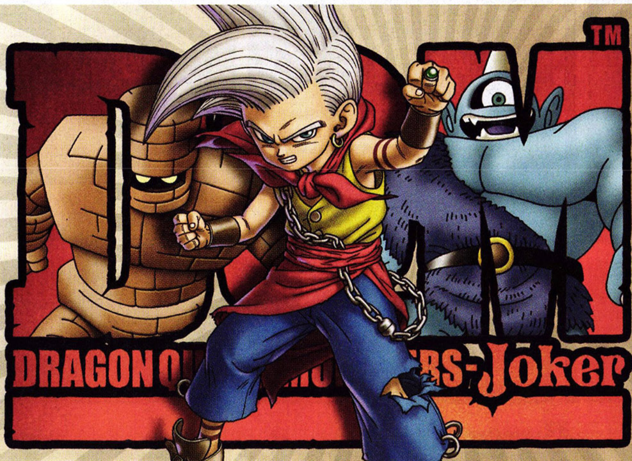


Explore the depths to soothing music or your own MP3 files.





BUT YOU'RE BETTER WITH TWO.



EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

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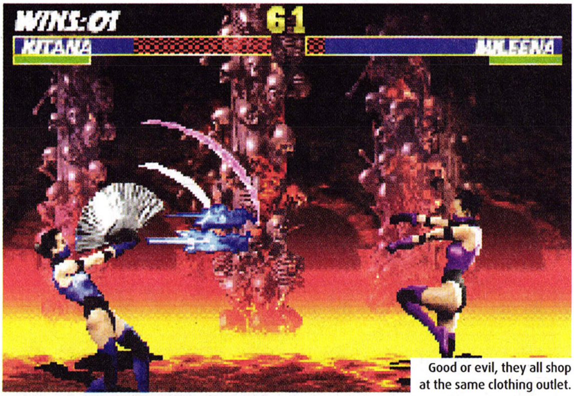


Good or evil, they all shop at the same clothing outlet.

WINS:00
92
SCORPION
MILEENA

WINS:00
97
SUB ZERO
MILEENA

Brawn and Brains

>ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
DEVELOPER: OTHER OCEAN • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2007

Midway's long-running fighting series is hitting the DS with a one-two punch in Ultimate Mortal Kombat. The first blow lands in the form of Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3, an authentic port of the classic digitized one-on-one fighter. In case you haven't earned your degree in Mortal Kombat history, here's the recap: Shao Kahn, ruler of Outworld, has invaded Earth. Only a select few warriors have survived to stop him, and so the battle rages between the heroes of Earthrealm (including series mainstays Liu Kang, Jax, and Scorpion) and the forces of Outworld (such as Shang Tsung, Reptile, and Sheeva). The DS version adds a convenient move list on the second screen and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection versus play.

UMK's second strike is Puzzle Kombat, a block-dropping puzzle game. Although it's a blatant rip-off of Capcom's Puzzle Fighter, the action is addictive and the special moves add an extra dimension to the formula. —CHRIS H.

Rascally Rabbids

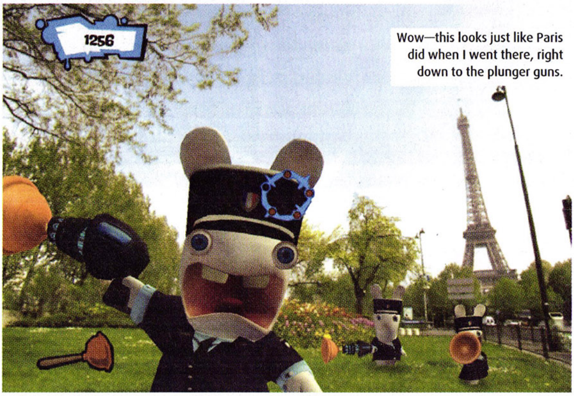
>RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS 2

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2007

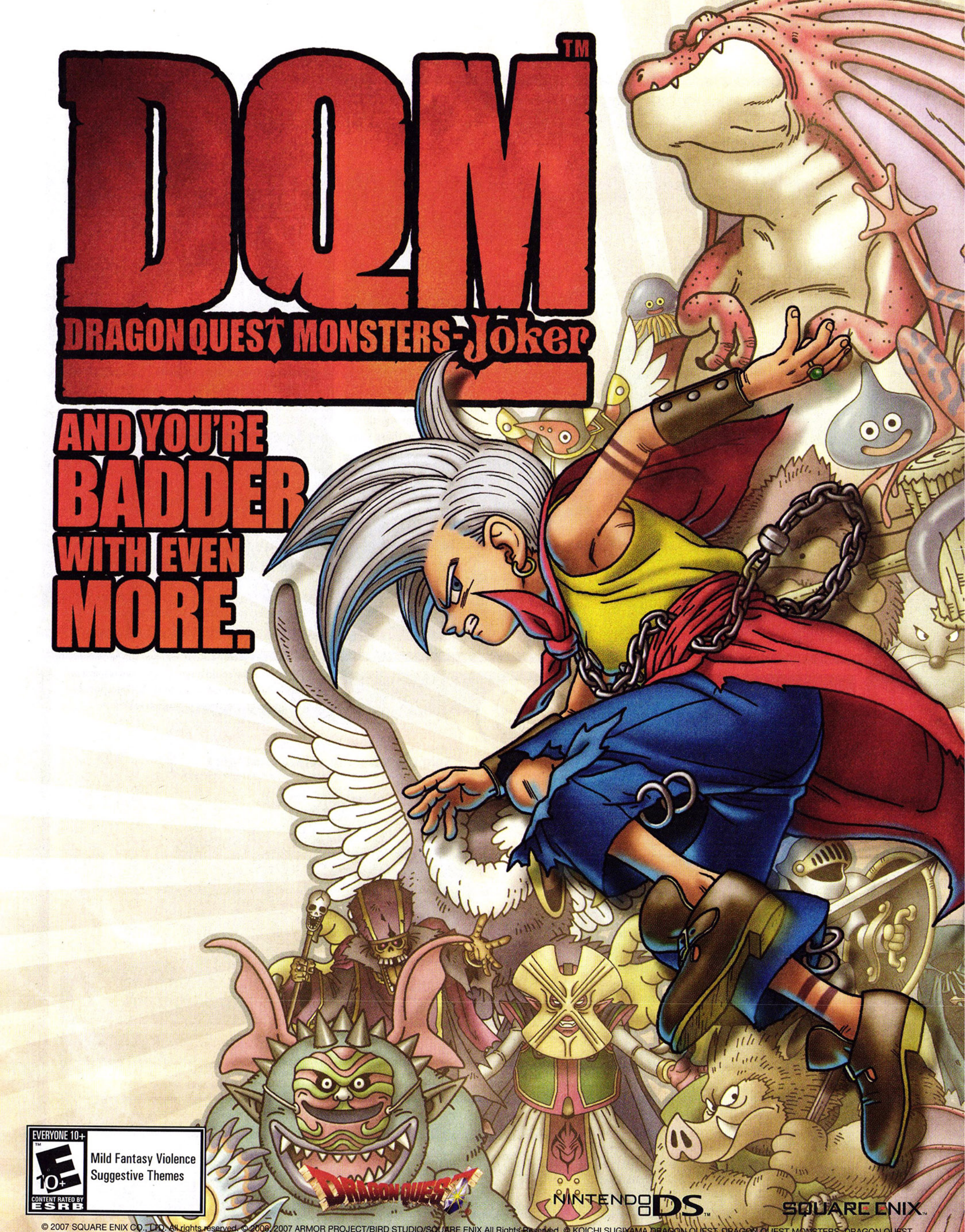
Although the Wii is already bursting with plenty of party games, nobody can deny that Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 is nonstop silly fun.

The game is packed with more than 100 crazy minigames. You can take them on one by one in the Free Play mode or challenge your friends to a "trip." Trips let you pick which minigames you want to play, and then you take them all on one after another. As you complete them you'll be able to unlock 20-plus costumes for your characters. You can also tell your friends to scram, and take a trip by yourself if you're feeling unsociable.

In Volume 219, we touched on a brilliant new aspect to Rabbids 2's shooting levels; now we're able to give the full scoop. They will feature full-motion-video backgrounds that will behave as if rendered in 3-D—the Rabbids will duck behind and jump over real objects as if they were designed into the stage. The effect is outstanding. —ANDY S.



Wow—this looks just like Paris did when I went there, right down to the plunger guns.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DRAGON QUEST MONSTERS-Joker
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Mild Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
DRAGON QUEST
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Unleash the Beast

>GODZILLA UNLEASHED

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **ATARI**
DEVELOPER: **ATARI** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2007**

Ever since I was a young'n and my dad gave me a Godzilla figure, I've been a huge fan of the big green lizard from the Land of the Rising Sun. So, getting to play Godzilla Unleashed was something that I'd really been looking forward to.

The game's 16 monsters are split among four factions: the Earth Defenders, the Mechas, the Mutants, and the Aliens. During my brief first play session, I spotted Megalon, Mechagodzilla, Angirus, and Godzilla himself. (Kudos if you actually recognize all of those names!) The game provides a nonlinear story that allows you to befriend or betray any of the four factions as you choose.

While smashing up the environments, I was impressed by just how interactive they are. Whether I was throwing a building at an opponent or knocking down a skyscraper with a tail swipe, I felt like an active participant in the world around me.

If you're as big of a Godzilla nerd as I am, be sure to mark your calendar for the November release of Godzilla Unleashed. *Gojira!* —ANDY S.

Is it strange that we still imagine men in those suits?

Trouser Press

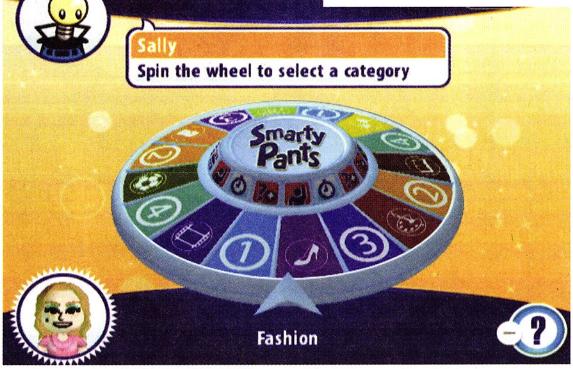
>SMARTY PANTS

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **EA**
DEVELOPER: **EA LOS ANGELES** • RELEASE: **FALL 2007**

Casual gaming has never been more popular, thanks to the Wii console's intuitive control scheme and family-friendly titles such as Wii Sports and Wii Play. EA is riding the games-built-for-everyone wave with the Wii-exclusive quiz title Smarty Pants, which tailors its questions and motion-based activities to the age of its players.

While up to four competitors test their gray matter by answering questions picked from a group of 20,000, they move their muscles in tests that range from tugs of war to dance-offs. During the contest, players' right and wrong answers cause the game to make adjustments in an effort to keep it close all the way to the end. In addition to competing against each other, players can team up for timed challenges in Family mode. Like the Nintendo-published group-activity titles, Smarty Pants requires the use of only Wii remotes (no nunchuks needed), increasing the chance that there will be enough controllers to go around. —GEORGE S.

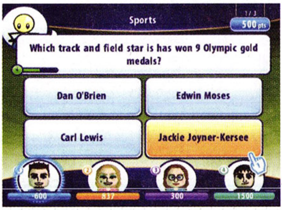
How could anyone see a wheel and not want to spin it? It's scientifically impossible.



Sally

Spin the wheel to select a category

Fashion



Sports

1/3

500 pts

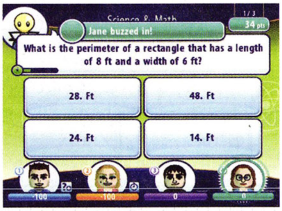
Which track and field star is has won 9 Olympic gold medals?

Dan O'Brien

Edwin Moses

Carl Lewis

Jackie Joyner-Kersee



Science & Math

1/3

34 pts

Jane buzzed in!

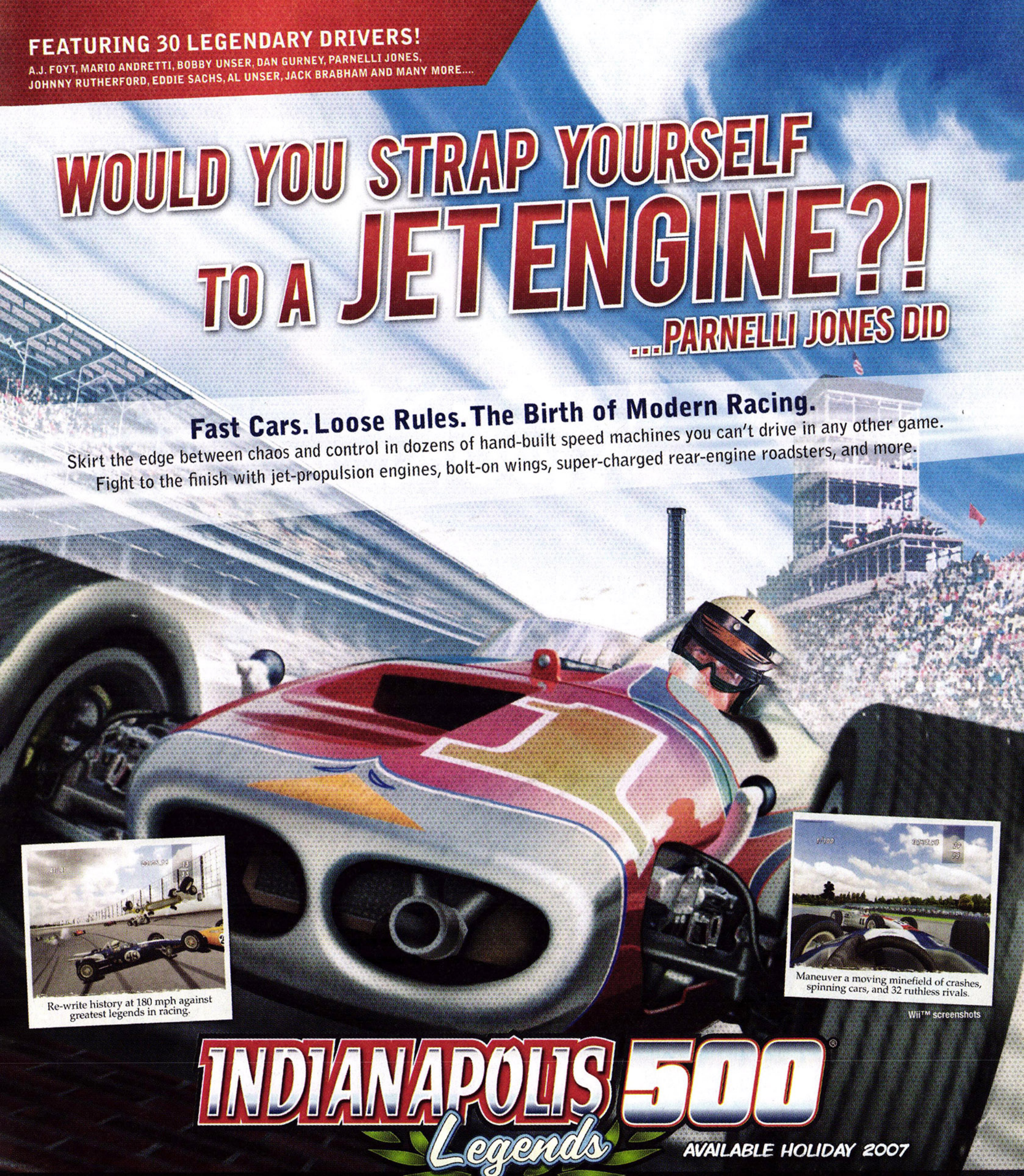
What is the perimeter of a rectangle that has a length of 8 ft and a width of 6 ft?

28. Ft

48. Ft

24. Ft

14. Ft



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Maneuver a moving minefield of crashes, spinning cars, and 32 ruthless rivals.

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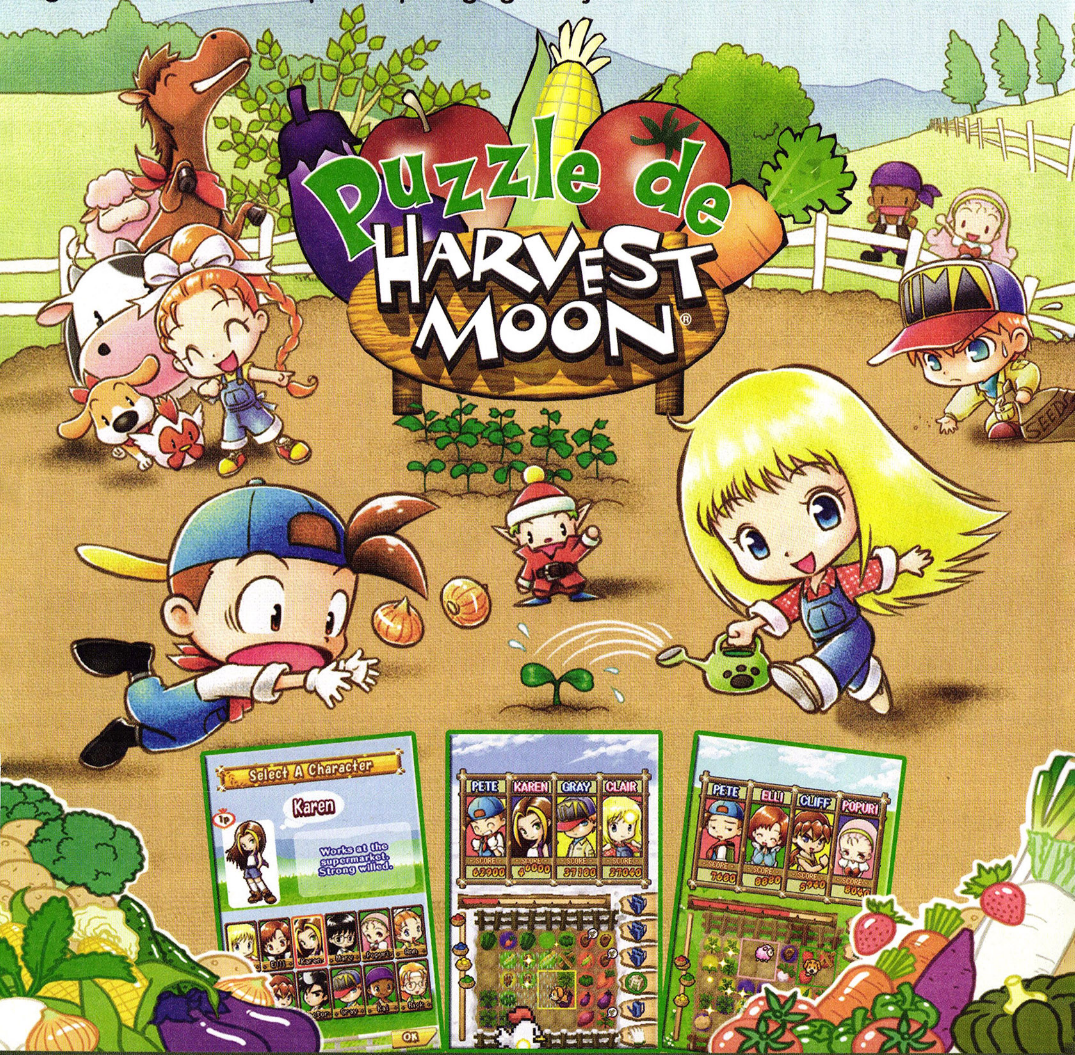
Do you have a Green Thumb?

Puzzle de Harvest Moon is a fast-paced, highly addictive puzzle game where you grow and harvest crops competing against your favorite Harvest Moon characters!


Puzzle de
HARVEST
MOON®
SEEDS
Select A Character
Karen
Works at the supermarket. Strong willed.
Elli
Karen
Mary
Popuri
Ann
Gray
Kai
Rick
OK
PETE
KAREN
GRAY
CLAIR
SCORE
62900
37100
27040
PETE
ELLI
CLIFF
POPURI
SCORE
7680
8880
5940
8040

EVERYONE
E
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NINTENDO DS™

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®
www.natsume.com

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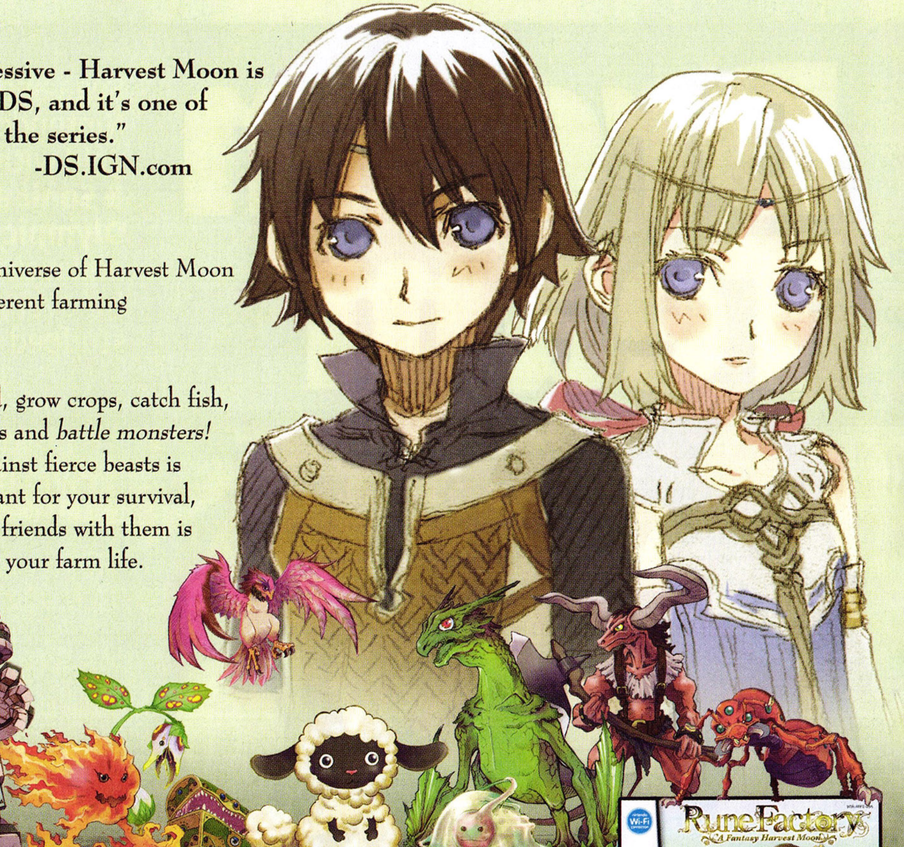
Rune Factory

A Fantasy Harvest Moon

"8.4 Impressive - Harvest Moon is reborn on DS, and it's one of the best of the series."
-DS.IGN.com

From the universe of Harvest Moon comes a different farming adventure...

Till the land, grow crops, catch fish, make friends and *battle monsters!* Battling against fierce beasts is very important for your survival, but making friends with them is essential for your farm life.



Torn
so happy··· you made it
k··· I was so very
worried...

Rune Factory
A Fantasy Harvest Moon
Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection
NINTENDO DS
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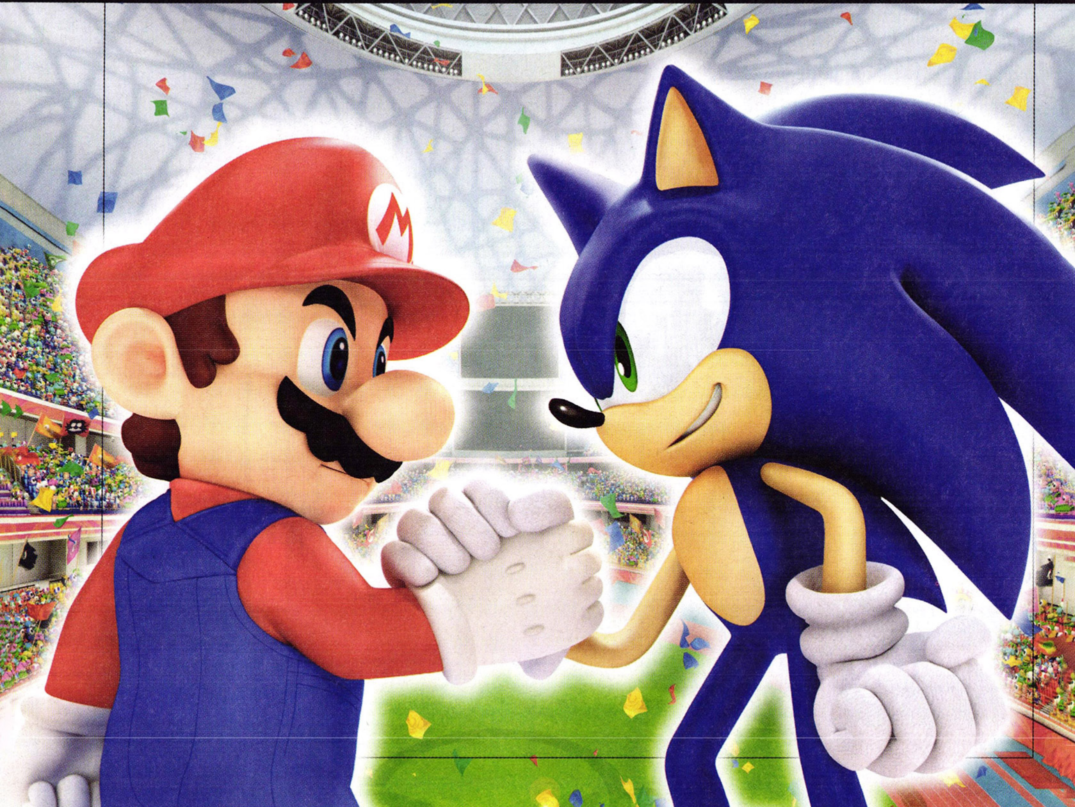
Dream Team

Sega and Nintendo go for gold with **Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games**, and we're there for every star-studded event.

By Chris Slate



Is it any coincidence that the official slogan for the 2008 Olympics is "One world one dream?" Once opposing generals in the SNES/Genesis war of the early '90s, Mario and Sonic have put aside their old feud to do what was once unthinkable: star in a game together. Or at least take their old rivalry to a new arena: the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

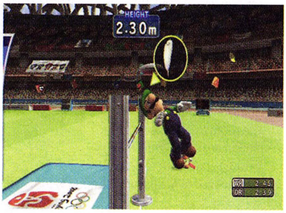
If the game's combination of plumbers, hedgehogs, and Olympic events sounds odd, consider this: gaming's two biggest icons are endorsing what is essentially the spiritual successor to Wii Sports. With equal appeal to both hard-core Mario and Sonic gamers and casual minigame players, this title seems destined for the top of the charts.

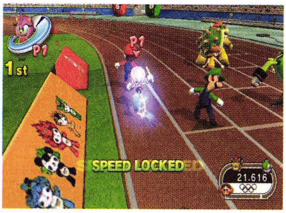
Longtime Nintendo players will also be glad to know that Mario & Sonic has a lot in common with Konami's classic Track & Field series. They share many of the same events, and the games all cause you to break a sweat. But now, instead of rapidly pressing buttons, players energetically pump their Wii remotes and nunchuks to urge their athletes on.

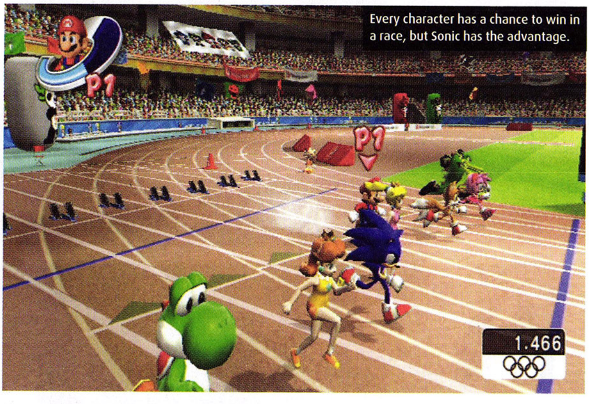
The game features 16 characters, eight from team Mario and eight from team Sonic. Each is rated in four categories: Speed, Power, Skill, and Stamina. So, for example, while it's possible for Bowser to beat Sonic in the 100m dash, the Blue Blur will have a definite advantage. And for players that might be looking for more of a Wii Sports-type experience, it's also possible to compete as a Mii.

Some minigame collections are fun at first, but shortly fizzle out. The developers at Sega must have realized this, because they've packed Mario & Sonic with plenty of modes and various unlockable rewards. You can win medals by challenging any one event in Single Match mode, and trophies are awarded to players that place third or higher in a series of events in Circuit mode. Each character offers a collection of specific challenges in Mission mode, and simpler minigames can be unlocked in the gallery, where you'll also hear a lot of Olympic trivia. Finally, players can upload their records for the world to see via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

The game includes 20 Olympic events, and for the first time anywhere, we had the chance to try each and every one. Read on for our hands-on impressions, and on November 20th, be sure to join Mario and Sonic as they put aside coins and rings to go for another type of gold: medals.



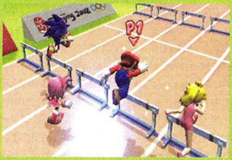



Every character has a chance to win in a race, but Sonic has the advantage.

Wii WARM-UPS

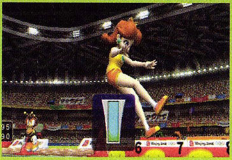
General Controls

While each event has its own special controls, they are all built on top of the following four basic actions. By the way, in many events the player can choose to use both the Wii remote and the nunchuk, or the Wii remote alone.



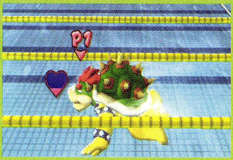
Running

Holding the Wii remote in one hand and the nunchuk in the other, you alternate moving them up and down as fast as you can. It's pretty intense!



Jumping

To jump, you swing the Wii remote vertically. Sometimes the angle of the swing is also taken into consideration.



Swimming

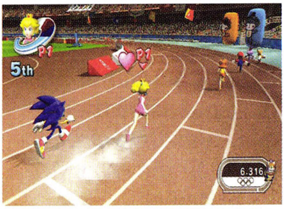
Swing the Wii remote and nunchuk left, right, up, or down depending on each character's unique swim style.

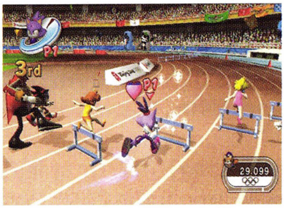
Moving

In sports like fencing, in which you must move your character left and right, you'll simply use the nunchuk's analog stick.

Athletics (Track)

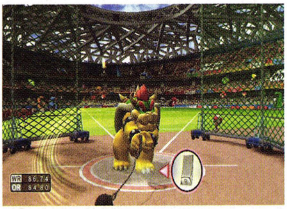
The track events are some of the most grueling, especially the longer ones like the 400m and 4x100m relay. Despite the sore arms that will result, the relay is a highlight in this category due to the dramatic baton hand-offs—mess up the timing and you'll quickly fall behind. It's easier to go all out in the shorter 100m dash, and the 110m and 400m hurdles add a welcome bit of technique to running.

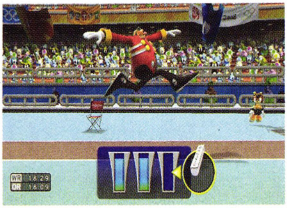




Athletics (Field)

Field competition is much more varied than track competition. We haven't yet mastered the jumping that's required in so many of the field events—you not only have to tilt the Wii remote quickly upward, but you also have to watch the angle at which you hold it. Still, we've had decent success and good fun with the long jump, triple jump, and high jump. The hammer throw is performed just as you'd imagine (swing the Wii remote around as you would the hammer), and works great. The pole vault and javelin throw round out this category and can be quite challenging due to tricky timing.

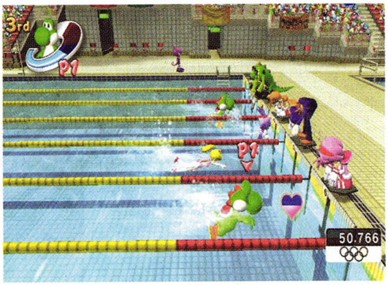




Aquatics

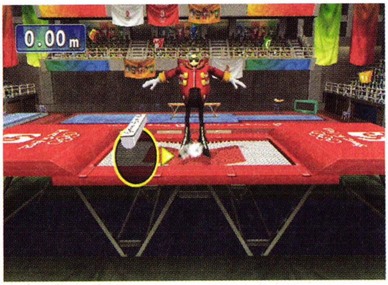
Swimming is comparable to running in the "tire your arms out" category, with a couple of important twists. First, characters have different swimming styles and require different controls. Second, the real key to victory is to breathe at the right times. A perfectly timed breath will reward the player with a boost, while a failed attempt will slow the character considerably.

The 100m freestyle is much more manageable than the 4x100m endurance test, but we managed to break our first world record in the latter. Go us!

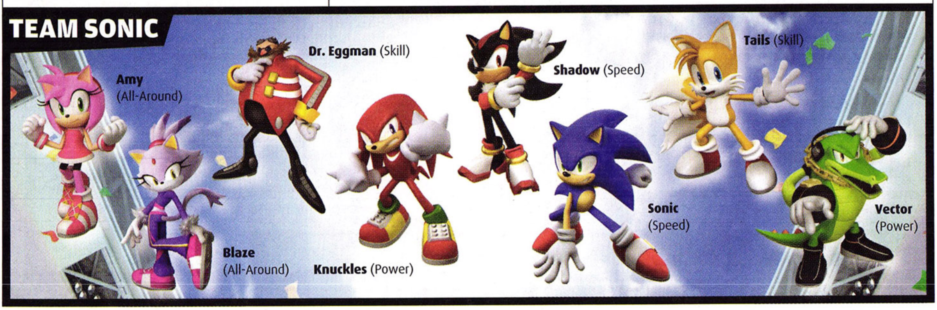


Gymnastics

The vault—which you'll unlock later in the game—is fun, but for fast-fingered Wii remote experts, the trampoline offers a more addictive challenge. Bouncing high is easy enough—just swing the remote upward a split-second before touching down—but this event is won or lost in the air. During each bounce a series of button commands and Wii remote motions flashes on the screen; you must match those onscreen prompts to perform midair spins before your character touches down.



TEAM SONIC



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Wii

UBISOFT

Archery

Using a bow in this event actually feels much more realistic than it does in The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. First you press both A and B, essentially "pinching" the Wii remote as if to hold an arrow in place. Then you pull the remote back as if you were really drawing a bow. Two onscreen targets must be aligned using both the remote and nunchuk to land a good shot, and the wind has to be taken into consideration, too. Once everything is lined up, you release A and B to let go of the bowstring. The whole process feels very natural, and is a lot of fun.

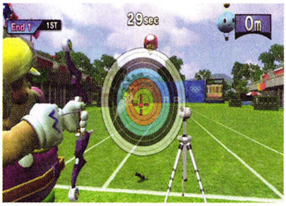
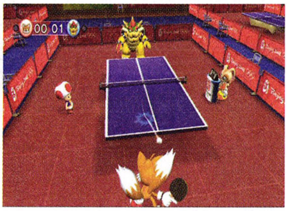


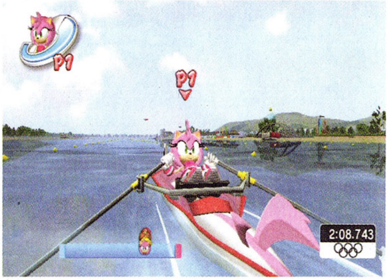
Table Tennis

This event can take a while to get the hang of, especially for Wii Sports Tennis players, because the timing required to hit the ball is totally different. While the action isn't as varied or nuanced as in full-scale tennis, players can attempt to catch their opponents off guard with power swings and soft shots.



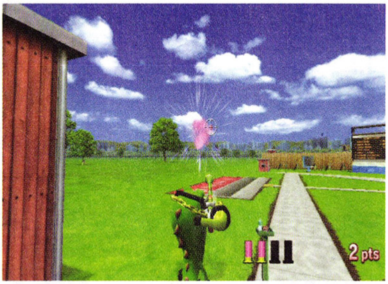
Rowing

The single sculls event has to be unlocked, and in our time with thé game so far, it isn't one of the stronger events. The player must simply pull the Wii remote and nunchuk back to simulate rowing, while pausing between strokes to input random onscreen button commands. The trampoline event does the "Simon Says" thing much better.



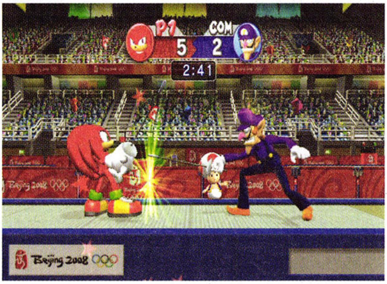
Shooting

Skeet is reminiscent of the NES classic Duck Hunt or the shooting game in Wii Play, only it's quite a bit harder. The player must move through various stations, stopping at each one to fire at a set number of targets. The targets get faster and are fired at more difficult angles as you progress.

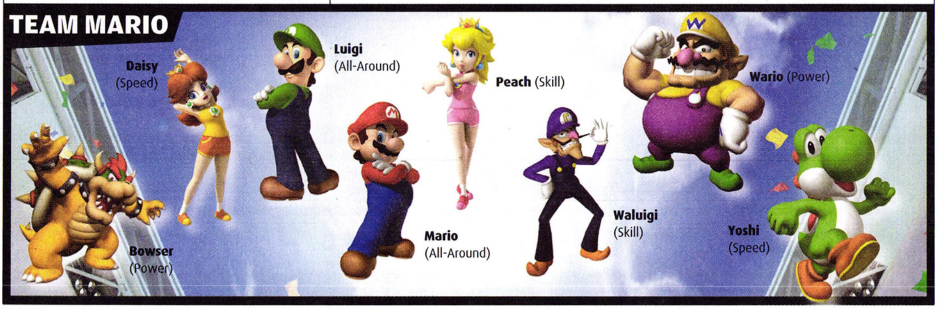


Fencing

The event is individual épée, and it consists of three things: moving toward or away from your opponent, parrying, and lunging. These three simple actions can be mixed endlessly in a multiplayer battle of wits. This is easily one of the game's most unique events, and is extracool when Mario and Sonic face off against one another with foils in hand.



TEAM MARIO



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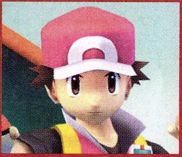
GET READY TO SMASH!

With just a month to go until SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL finally hits, we look at the game's 10 MOST EXCITING FEATURES, plus a pack of all-new screens.

By Chris Slate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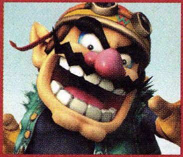
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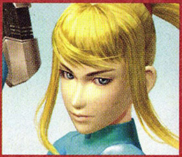
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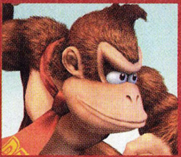
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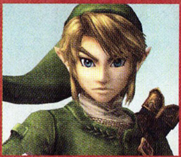
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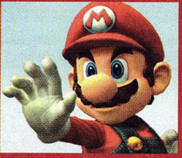
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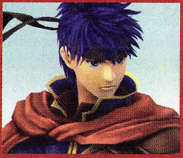
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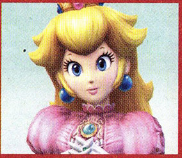
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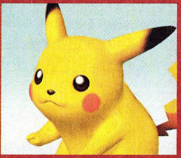
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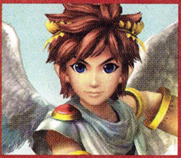
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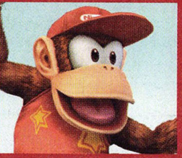
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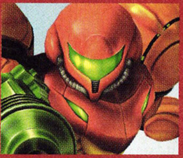
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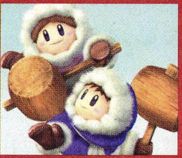
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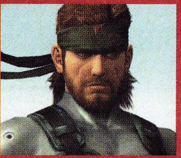
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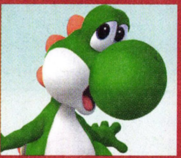
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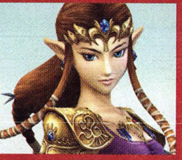
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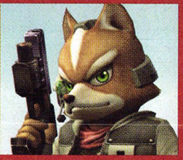
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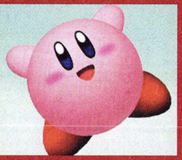
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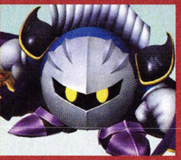
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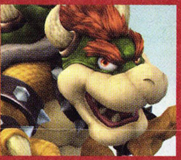
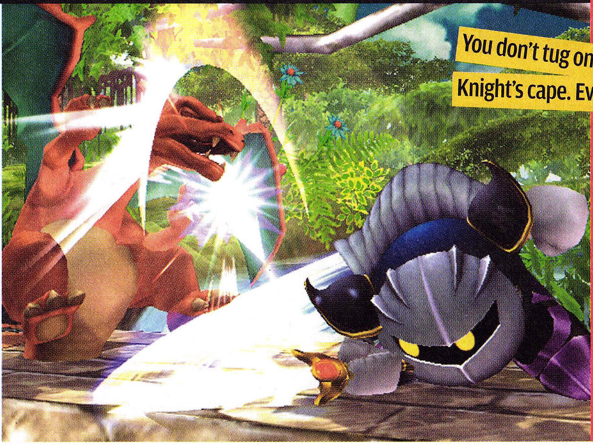

BOWSER

Call your friends and pull out your other three controllers—the wait for Super Smash Bros. Brawl has been excruciating, but the biggest multiplayer game of the year is almost here! If the success of the last Smash is any indication (it's still the best-selling title for the GameCube), then there will be an awful lot of fans brawling when the game hits on December 3rd.

To celebrate Brawl's impending arrival, we've taken a big, last look at the features that have players drooling in anticipation, and we've also managed to snag a nice big batch of never-before-seen shots of the game in action.

But before we get started, a public service announcement: if you haven't been to SmashBros.com lately, then get your butt over there! Every single weekday, Masahiro Sakurai—the genius behind the Smash Bros. series—posts new information about Brawl. It's worth reading for the hilarious picture captions alone!



You don't tug on Meta Knight's cape. Ever.

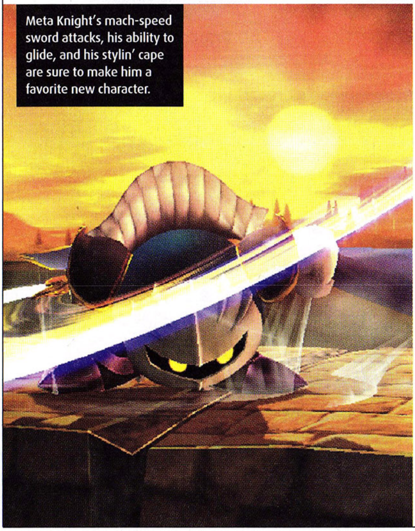
#10

An All-Star Cast

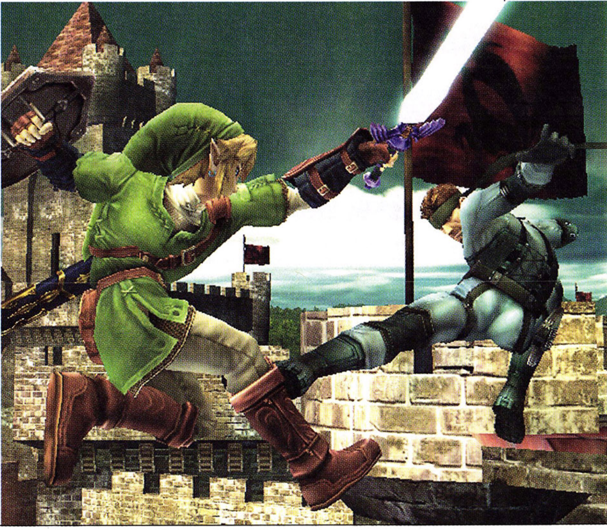
The dream mix of classic characters is at the very core of what makes this series great. Mario vs. Link! Donkey Kong vs. Bowser! Fox vs. Samus! Smash Bros. gives fans the kind of matchups that they can normally only dream about. Brawl has upped the ante with a truly unbeatable collection of some of the most beloved video game characters of all time. And while they all still share the same basic control setup, the fighters play more differently from each other than ever before. The developers were determined to stay true to the spirit of the characters with every one of their moves, even if it meant that the gameplay had to go in bold new directions to accommodate them (as with the new Pokémon Trainer, who can swap between three different Pokémon on the fly, and Wario, who can ride his motorcycle).

Visually, the cast has never looked better. Some characters, such as Link, have been updated to match their appearance in recent games. Others, like Kid Icarus's Pit, have been totally reimagined. All of the characters take advantage of the Wii's extra power to show more detail and lighting effects than were possible on the GameCube.

And with the addition of Konami's Solid Snake to the group—the first non-Nintendo character to ever appear in the series—who knows what other secrets the game may be hiding?



Meta Knight's mach-speed sword attacks, his ability to glide, and his stylin' cape are sure to make him a favorite new character.



#9

Four Kinds of Control

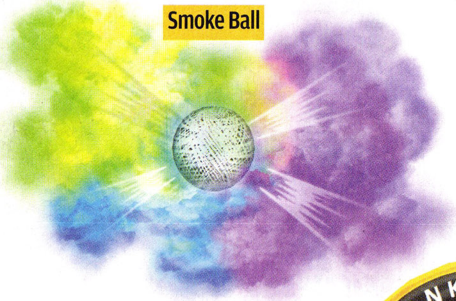
This really shows that the game's creators have thought of everything. Knowing that many longtime Smash players would prefer to stick with the tried-and-true GameCube control from Melee, and that other gamers might hesitate to put down their cool new Wii remote, the developers included several different control options to please everyone. Players can plug in their old GameCube controller, use the similar Wii Classic controller, try the Wii remote and nunchuk, or play using just the Wii remote by itself. It's even possible to alter the button configurations for a preferred control style, and then save the changes to a profile under the player's name, making prematch setup fast and easy.

#8

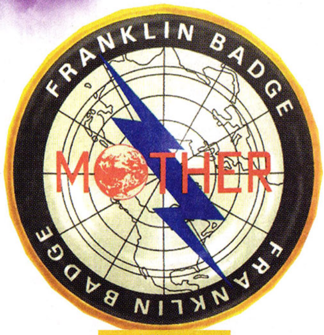
The Craziest Items Yet

The broad selection of over-the-top items has been one of the series' most defining characteristics from the start. Brawl includes a long list of new items for players to puzzle over and punish their opponents with, and many returning classics have been freshened up.

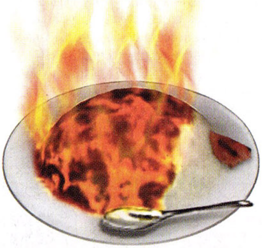
The best items can totally change the flow of a battle. For example, the sticky new Gooey Bomb will turn the fight into a game of Hot Potato, in which the character stuck to the bomb tries to put it on someone else before it explodes. The Franklin Badge will render the wearer impervious to projectile attacks, and everyone has to run from whoever wields the Golden Hammer, which is practically an instant KO if it connects (assuming that it isn't a squeak toy in disguise).



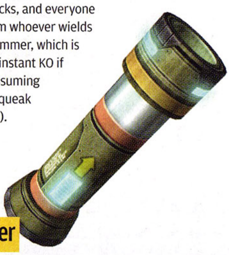
Smoke Ball



Franklin Badge



Superspicy Curry



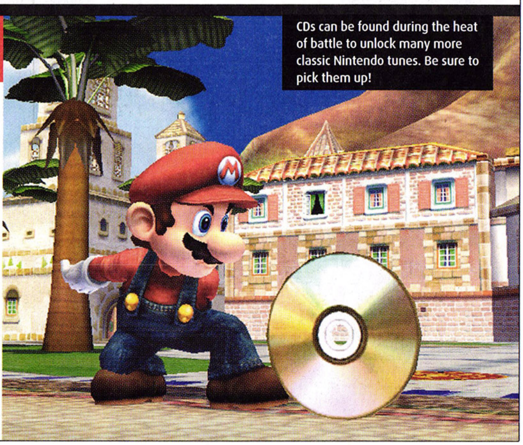
Cracker Launcher

#7

The Best Soundtrack Ever

If you could only own one video game soundtrack, this would have to be it. This game is like a greatest-hits album! Each newly arranged track marks the triumphant return of a beloved melody, from a glorious new version of the Kid Icarus tune, to an epic Metal Gear Solid 4 theme, to a glee-inducing Ocarina of Time medley.

The lineup of musicians that contributed to Brawl is a who's-who of legendary game composers. We're talking about the people behind the most memorable themes ever, like Koji Kondo (Zelda, Mario), Akihiro Honda (Metal Gear Solid 4), Kazumi Totaka (Animal Crossing, the Yoshi series), Kenji Yamamoto (Metroid series), Masato Kouda (Devil May Cry), Tomoko Sasaki (NiGHTS into Dreams), Yuzo Koshiro (ActRaiser, Streets of Rage), and Yoko Shimomura (Kingdom Hearts), just to name a few. The main Smash Bros. theme was supervised by none other than Nobuo Uematsu, the legendary Final Fantasy composer.



CDs can be found during the heat of battle to unlock many more classic Nintendo tunes. Be sure to pick them up!

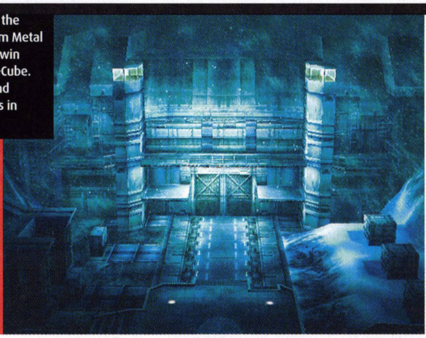
#6

Ultimate Fan Service

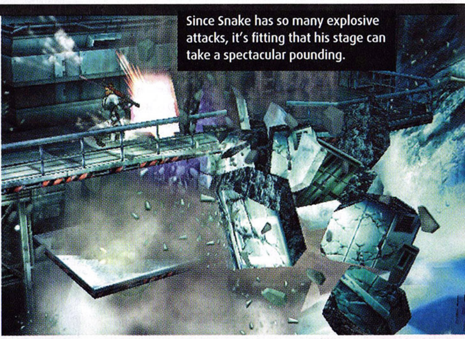
Apparently the developers weren't satisfied with simply packing in nearly every classic Nintendo character, game world, and piece of music. Like Melee, Brawl has been designed to be experienced over hundreds of hours, and therefore can accommodate just about any reasonable request that a player might have. Want to make your own rules? No problem. Set up a Special Brawl with double stamina, giant heads, metal bodies, and heavy gravity if you want. Enjoy some songs, but not others? Go in and adjust the likelihood that any single track will be played in each arena. During battle, you can even find CDs that will unlock more classic tunes.

The developers have also put in stickers for players to find, collect, and display—countless pieces of artwork that span the entire history of Nintendo games. And, of course, trophies have returned from Melee—a massive 3-D model collection of characters, vehicles, items, and more.

Options and features like these certainly aren't integral to the core gameplay, and in most other titles they would be among the first things cut to finish the game on time and under budget. The fact that Brawl will ship with stuff like this still intact shows just how dedicated the creators are to providing a truly landmark, triple-A game.



Snake's arena is the starting area from Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes on GameCube. It's really cool and weird seeing this in Smash!



Since Snake has so many explosive attacks, it's fitting that his stage can take a spectacular pounding.

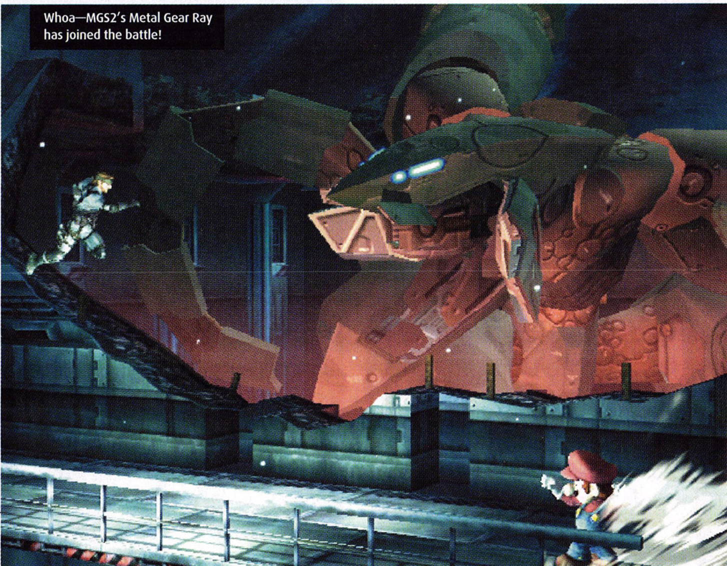
#5

Amazing Arenas

Brawl's new stages offer truly breathtaking scenes, from soaring over Super Mario Sunshine's Delfino Plaza, to a space battle in Star Fox's Lylat system, to a castle siege in the world of Fire Emblem. Every area features amazing detail, lighting, and special effects, making Brawl one of the prettiest Wii games by far.

The arenas pay tribute not just to classic games, but to fan-favorite parts of those games. For example, players can mix it up on Twilight Princess's Bridge of Eldin, the site of Link's dramatic joust with King Bulbin. Additionally, popular supporting characters make cameos on certain stages, such as in Smashville, where you'll find Tom Nook and other familiar faces from Animal Crossing.

The game has a great mix of standard arenas—for those who prefer a simpler, more straightforward battle—and over-the-top "themed" stages that directly influence the flow of the fight. Many of the levels change over time, from day to night or from one location to another, and some undergo a total transformation. With so much visual and play variety, gamers of all styles will be able to find stages built just for them



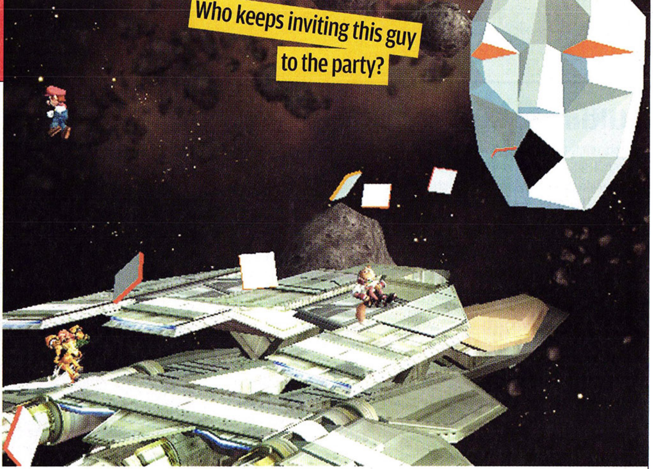
Whoa—MGS2's Metal Gear Ray has joined the battle!

#4

Cool Cameos

Before, only Pokémon could join in a fight. Now, in addition to Poké Balls, Brawl offers Assist Trophies. Although the effect of the two types of items is much the same—each summons a character that presents a unique danger to the players—Assist Trophies allow for character cameos from the whole world of Nintendo games!

The lineup of cameo characters includes Captain Falcon's arch-enemy Samurai Goroh, Star Fox's final boss Andross, Mario's old rival Hammer Bro, and even a Nintendog! Oh, and Dr. Wright, from the SNES version of SimCity, will burst a city right up through the ground you're standing on! It can't get any more obscure or awesome than that.



Who keeps inviting this guy to the party?

#3

Final Smashes

Each character now has a unique and awe-inspiring ultimate attack called the Final Smash. For example, Mario can send a massive wave of fireballs across the entire screen, Link can use the power of the Triforce to trap a foe while he delivers quick slashes, and Samus can fire the biggest laser you've ever seen. These attacks are epic, and feature some of the best visual effects in the entire game.

A Final Smash can be performed only after obtaining a Smash Ball, which is pretty rare. Any player can grab one when it appears, so its sudden appearance will always cause chaos! Victory or defeat can depend on who controls a Final Smash, and the fact that each character's is unique adds another key strategy element to choosing who to play as.

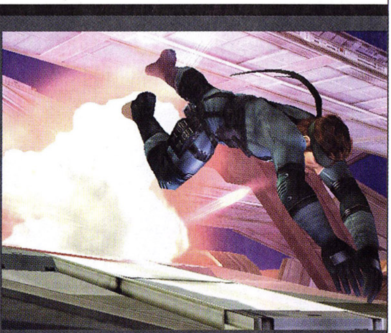
WHO'S THE NEW GUY?

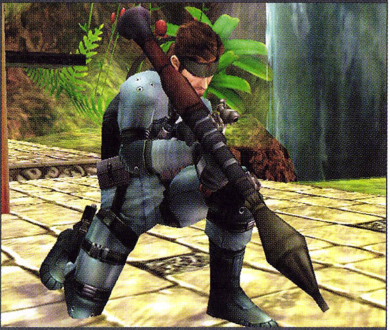
Snake Surprise

Snake?! SNAAAAAKE!! Now that the first non-Nintendo character has joined the battle, it really seems like anything can happen in Brawl! To make Solid Snake fit into the world of Smash Bros., the developers have removed his too-realistic handguns and rifles and focused instead on bigger weapons with over-the-top explosions.

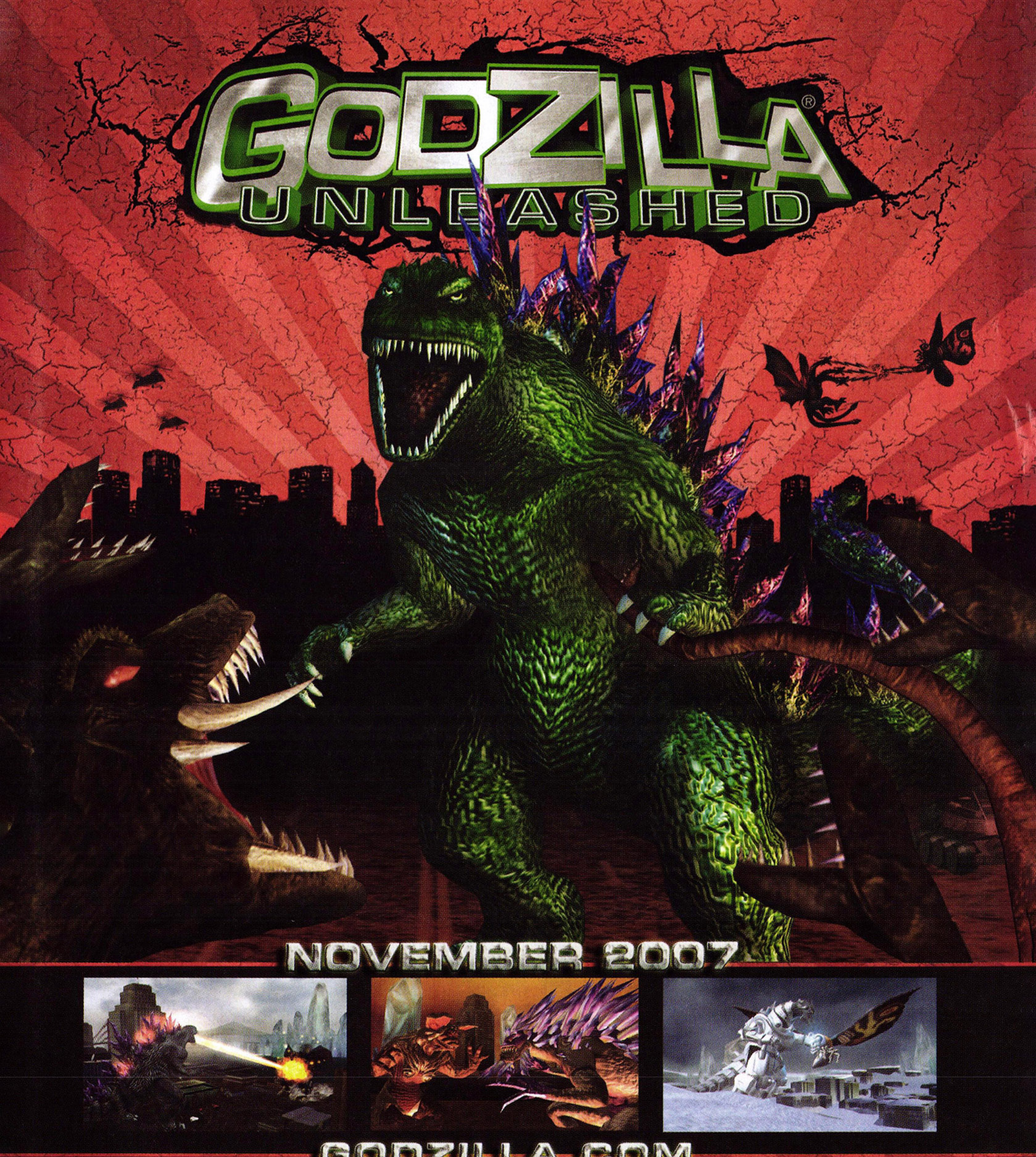
The word is that Hideo Kojima—the creator of the Metal Gear series—approached the Smash team directly to request that his character be included in his favorite fighting series. The Metal Gear Solid 4 composer contributed music for the game, and we hear that Kojima-san had a hand in creating Snake's stage, so Snake's Brawl debut is an incredible joint effort in every regard.

Snake fighting Mario? Sonic racing Mario at the Olympic Games? The world has gone crazy, and we're loving it!





The trademark weaponry, the close-quarters combat moves, the trademark gestures—the developers have created a Smash Bros. fighter that is 100% Snake.



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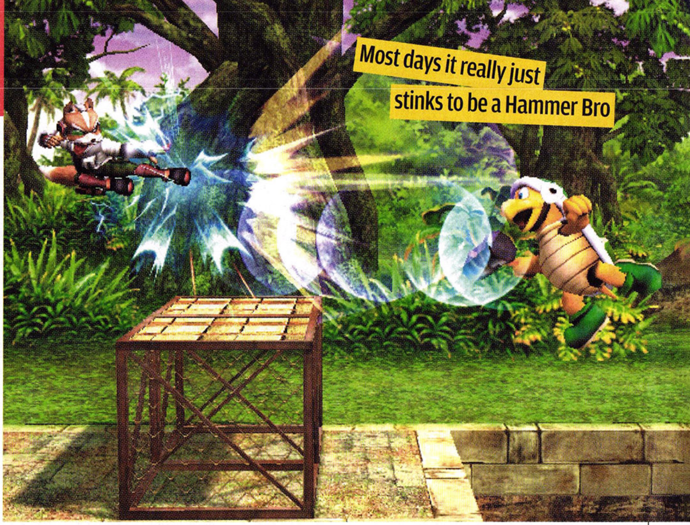
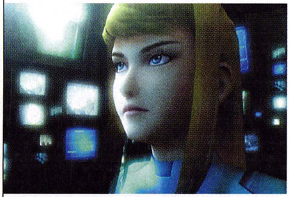


Adventure Mode

This isn't just the small-scale adventure mode from Melee, but a fully fleshed-out single-player side-scrolling action game. It's called Super Smash Bros. Brawl: The Subspace Emissary, and it could probably justify the full price of the game all by itself.

This mode is driven by a story that is told through amazing cinema scenes that show the personal histories and struggles of each character. Not much is known of the plot—just that the game's many heroes come together to stand against the mysterious Ancient Minister, whose Subspace Army is cutting apart pieces of the world and taking them into subspace. In this mode players will see even more character cameos, such as Mario's old enemy Bullet Bill and Pit's goddess Palutena. The classic NES robot R.O.B. even appears, and the first boss is Mario Sunshine's Petey Piranha!



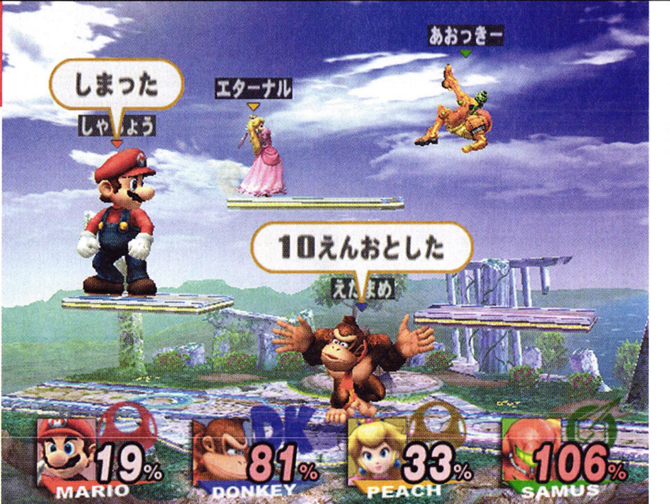
#1

Wi-Fi Battles

And finally, coming in at number one is Brawl's Wi-Fi support—four-player online battles, baby! Many fans had worried that this feature wouldn't happen, that Nintendo would not be able to expand the competition in Smash Bros. across the globe. We couldn't be happier that those worries were unfounded.

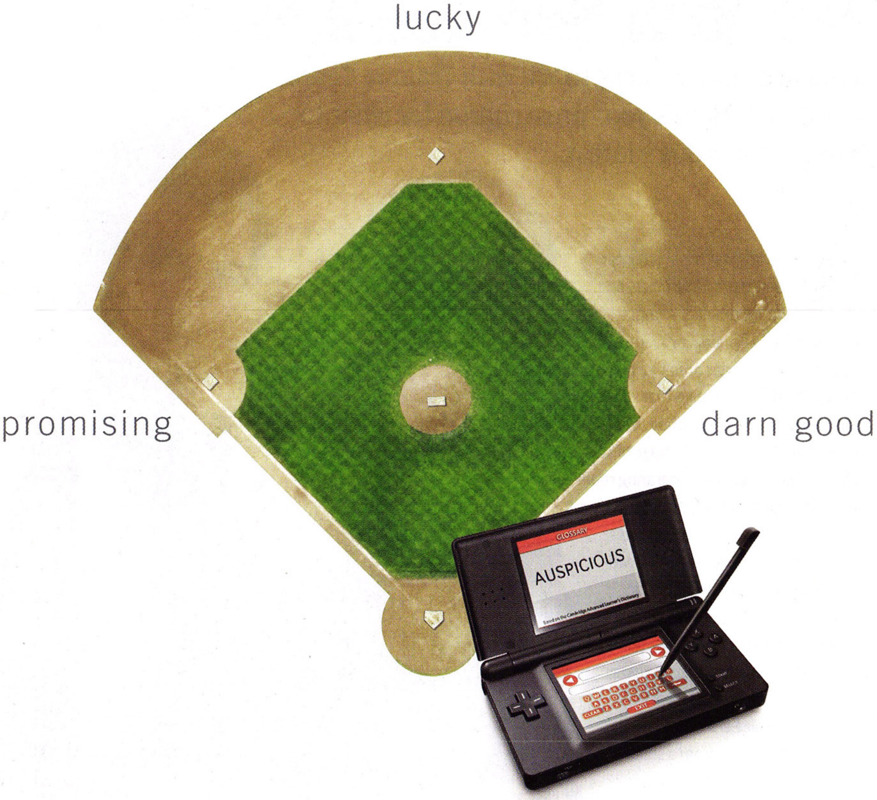
There is still a lot to be said for playing against three friends sitting in the room with you, but with Wi-Fi you can show your skills to the world and test yourself against the best of the best. You can even display your own unique style through custom icons, and—when playing with registered friends—you can create custom messages to taunt them with.

The developers really have thought of everything—you can even practice your moves on a sandbag while waiting for a match to start. The Nintendo Power crew will be taking on all comers the moment the game releases, so be ready!



When you battle friends that you've registered, you'll see their names appear above their characters, and you can even taunt them with four different custom messages. [Don't worry, the game will be in English—this screen is from the Japanese version.]

Jim liked Sara. Sara liked Jim. Jim was saying all the right things and if he kept it up, it was turning out to be one ______________ night indeed.



My Word Coach is the fun new game that improves your vocabulary. And when you have a larger vocabulary, you have a better chance of getting what you want. Knowing the right word makes all the difference.

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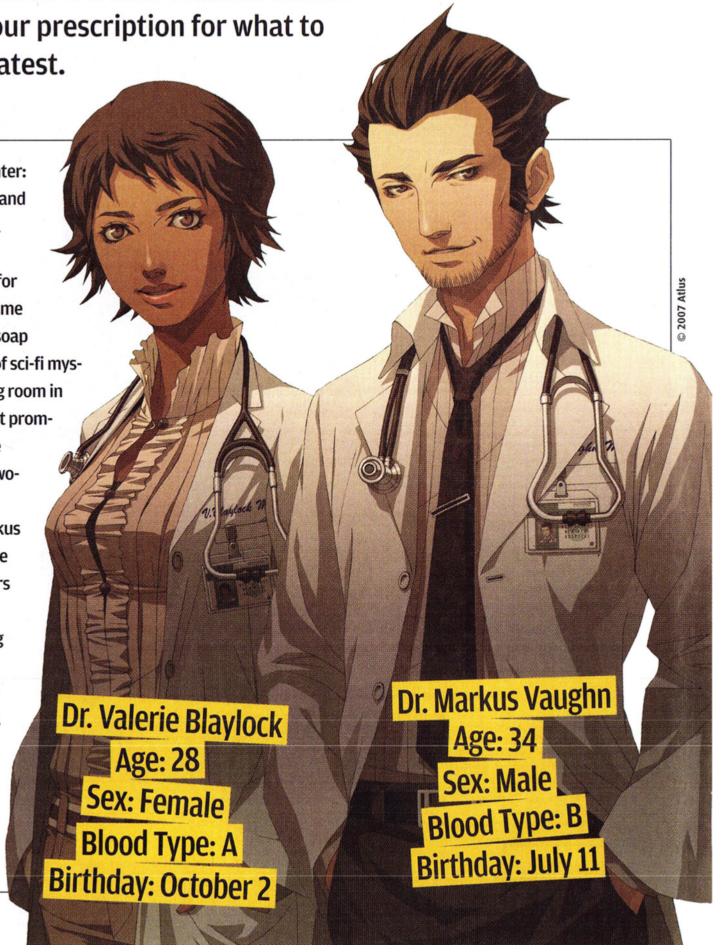
DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Medical drama returns to Wii with Trauma Center: New Blood. Here's your prescription for what to expect from Atlus's latest.

By Chris Hoffman

The original Trauma Center: Under the Knife for DS and its Wii remake, Trauma Center: Second Opinion, proved that medical miracles aren't just for TV shows. This November, that same formula of quick-reflex action, a soap opera-like storyline, and a tinge of sci-fi mystique is returning to the operating room in Trauma Center: New Blood—and it promises to be even better than before thanks to full voice-overs and a two-player co-op mode. Two playable characters—veteran doctors Markus Vaughn and Valerie Blaylock—take the spotlight in a story set 10 years after the previous games in the series, and their heroic life-saving trials will take them from a small hospital in Alaska to California to the US's east coast and beyond as they face a medical crisis the likes of which the world has rarely seen. Here's a sampling of what you'll encounter when you put on your scrubs.



Dr. Valerie Blaylock
Age: 28
Sex: Female
Blood Type: A
Birthday: October 2

Dr. Markus Vaughn
Age: 34
Sex: Male
Blood Type: B
Birthday: July 11

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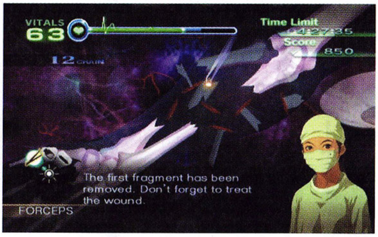
An Unbearable Incident

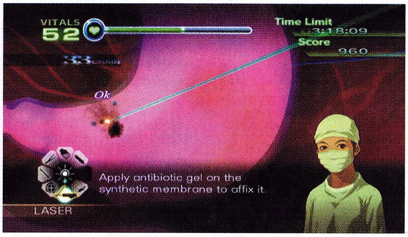
The first stage of New Blood introduces you to the basics of surgery. As in previous Trauma Center games, stitches, antibiotic gel, and forceps are among your eight primary tools (which you can switch between by pressing directions on the nunchuk's Control Stick or the remote's Control Pad). In this operation, you must treat a patient who's been mauled by a bear. All things considered, it could be a lot worse. Your first order of business is to heal small wounds by applying antibiotic gel (equipped by pressing up), and suture large wounds by making a back-and-forth pattern with the stitches (equipped by pressing right). The second step is to repair the patient's fractured arm. You must equip the forceps (by pressing up-left), then press A and B to grab shattered bone fragments and pull them out of the arm muscles. Once the bone fragments are removed, you must reassemble them like puzzle pieces to repair the bone.



The first fragment has been removed. Don't forget to treat the wound.

It Is a Tumor

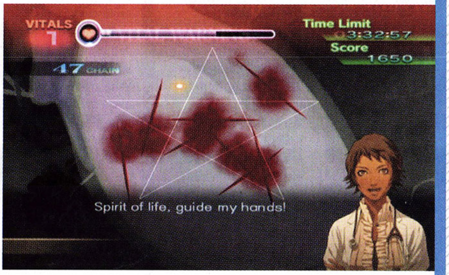
A laser, an ultrasound, a drain, and a scalpel are also at your disposal. They're essential in saving your patients, and you'll have a chance to try them out when a man comes to Montgomery Memorial Hospital suffering from stomach tumors. By pressing down, you can access a surgical laser, which is very effective for eliminating small tumors. Large tumors are tougher to get rid of—you must first activate the ultrasound (by pressing down-left), then press the A Button to find the hidden growths. After you see one, you can select the scalpel by pressing left, then make an incision to expose the tumor. You must then use the drain (by pressing down-left) to remove the cytoplasm before cutting out the tumor and patching up the wound with a synthetic membrane. A syringe rounds out your list of tools—it's used for injecting patients with a variety of medications.



Apply antibiotic gel on the synthetic membrane to affix it.

You've Got the Touch

When an accident at a church construction site crushes a nun's chest, only Dr. Blaylock can save her. After treating external wounds with stitches and antibiotic gel, you must work on the patient's internal wounds. Sister Catherine's internal organs are hemorrhaging, and you must constantly drain the blood so you can suture her wounds, while simultaneously dealing with hidden injuries that you must identify with the ultrasound before they become serious. It's a difficult procedure—in fact, it would be impossible if the doctor didn't learn the "healing touch" when all hope seemed lost. You can perform the "healing touch" as both Dr. Vaughn and Dr. Blaylock by holding down B and Z and drawing a star-shaped pattern. The technique slows down time so you can heal injuries before they become lethal. Using it is frequently critical to your surgical success.

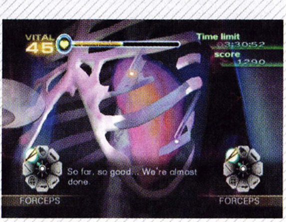


Spirit of life, guide my hands!

IT TAKES TWO

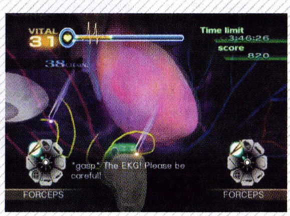
One of Trauma Center: New Blood's standout new features is the ability to play through the entire game in two-player cooperative mode. With two players operating you can perform surgeries faster than ever.

"Cooperative mode is something that can be selected for every operation, not unlike how every operation can be set to one of three difficulty settings," says Aram Jabbari, Atlus's assistant manager of public relations and sales. "During the actual operation, both players are free to treat patients as necessary, but since the cooperative mode of each level actually ups the challenge level slightly, not communicating and working together could easily mean seconds lost or plummeting vitals.

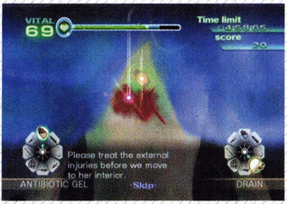


So far, so good... We're almost done.

"What players will find is that many of the techniques necessary for successfully operating on patients in Trauma Center lend themselves perfectly to a two-person approach. For example, one person can equip their ultrasound and locate a hemorrhage while the second person has already readied their scalpel. By the time the second player has made the incision, the first player has already equipped their drain. While many skilled players can execute some of the more advanced procedures rapidly, gamers will find that the kind of teamwork that cooperative mode brings to the table enhances the speed and excitement of the operations even further."



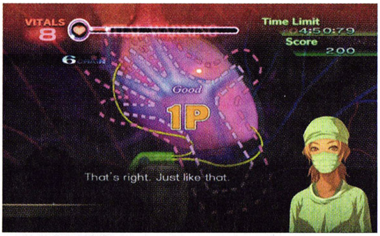
gasp The EKG! Please be careful!



Please treat the external injuries before we move to her interior.

Pick Up the Pace

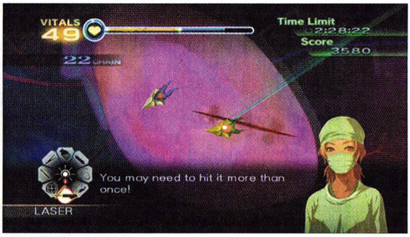
A child with a heart defect has a malfunctioning pacemaker, and it's up to you to replace it. The Trauma Center games have been known for the diversity of operations you perform, and this procedure exemplifies that characteristic. After opening up the patient, you must use the scalpel to cut the two wires coming off of the pacemaker, suture the connection point on the patient's heart, and remove the wires as well as the pacemaker itself using the forceps. You'll then have to replace the pacemaker and attach new wires to the heart; it's a delicate operation that requires extreme precision. The operation introduces a new mechanic to the game: delivering a heart massage by hand if the patient goes into cardiac arrest. A moving outline of a hand appears on the screen, and when it overlaps a handprint over the patient's heart, you must press A and B simultaneously to restore the patient's heartbeat.



That's right. Just like that.

A Deadly Stigma

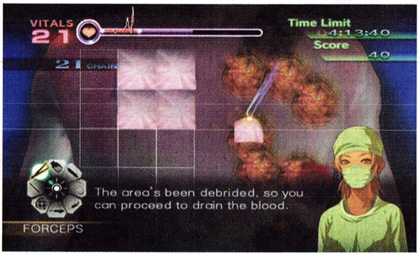
The previous Trauma Center games focused on a mysterious, parasitelike disease called GUILT. In New Blood, a deadly new pathogen called Stigma is wreaking havoc on the medical world. There's no cure for Stigma, so it must be removed from a victim's body. After you open up the patient—in this case, Professor Lloyd Wilkens—you discover cuts on his heart, and a very mobile pathogen inside his body. You must use your laser to eradicate the pathogen while using your stitches to heal any wounds the Stigma virus creates. Stigma is highly resistant to treatment, and the virus goes through multiple forms before it's destroyed. Who knows what forms it will take as the game progresses? Cut-scenes indicate that Dr. Vaughn has some previous connection with Stigma, but you'll have to learn that secret for yourself.



You may need to hit it more than once!

Trial by Fire

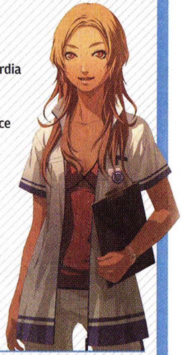
A fire breaks out at Concordia Medical Institute in Los Angeles, California, resulting in a man being severely burned on the left side of his body. The main method of treatment is skin grafts—transplanting healthy skin from the right side of his body to repair the damaged left side. You'll use the syringe a lot during this operation; you must inject the skin on his right side with culture fluids to prepare the skin for transplant before cutting it loose with the scalpel, moving it with the forceps, and setting it in place with antibiotic gel. You'll also use the syringe to inject third-degree-burn areas with a cooling solution in order to excise the dead skin from the patient's body. And you must perform the operation while constantly draining blood from the patient's wounds, lest it disrupt the skin grafts. The procedure is tricky, but there are plenty of even-more-advanced operations to undertake. Remember, the patient's life is in your hands.



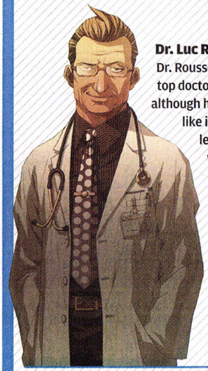
The area's been debrided, so you can proceed to drain the blood.

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

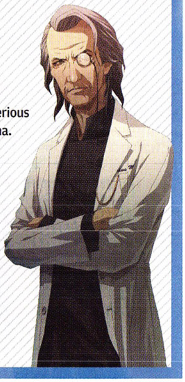
Trauma Center isn't just about performing surgery—it's also about the characters' lives, challenges, and interpersonal relationships. Here are a few of the key characters you'll encounter as the story unfolds.



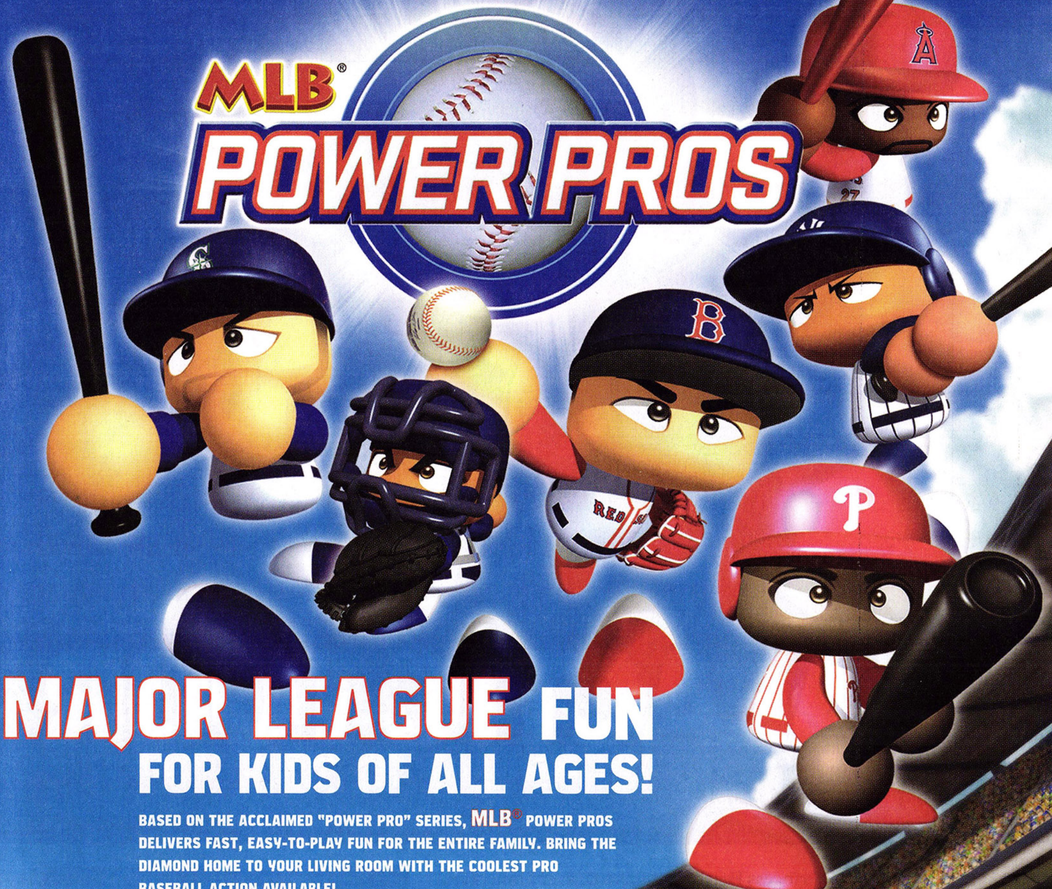
Elena Salazar
Elena is a nurse at Concordia Medical Institute. She seeks out Dr. Vaughn in Alaska to have him replace a pump in her pancreas that's required due to a genetic immune-system disorder.



Dr. Luc Rousseau
Dr. Rousseau is one of the top doctors at Concordia, although he doesn't act like it. He's liable to leave the tough work to other surgeons, then take the credit for himself.



Professor Lloyd Wilkens
Professor Wilkens is researching the mysterious pathogen called Stigma. He's been wanting Dr. Vaughn and Dr. Blaylock to return from Alaska to aid him for some time.



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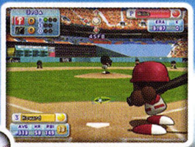
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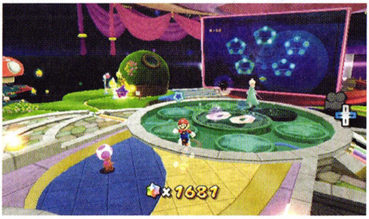
GALACTIC TOUR

Blast off with us as we look at the some of the celestial attractions Mario will visit in Super Mario Galaxy. By Chris Shepperd



Poor Princess Peach. It seems that every time she turns around, Bowser is there to make her life a nightmare. Fortunately, that means her hero Mario isn't too far behind. In their most recent account, the famed trio takes to the stars to continue their operatic adventure.

At the beginning of the story, Mario finds himself on a floating world called the Comet Observatory. Rosalina, matriarch to the Lumas, can help Mario reach Bowser, provided you can get her observatory's power back to full speed. You'll collect stars from remote galaxies so that she can harness their power and aid you in your quest.

We've put together a sampling of the galaxies that Mario will visit, but there are many more extraordinary places in Super Mario Galaxy.

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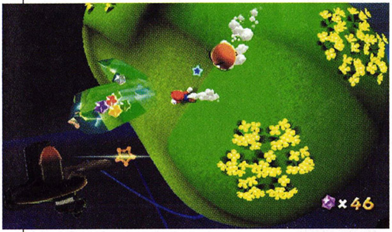
GOOD EGG GALAXY

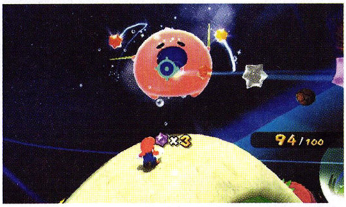
Good Egg Galaxy is the first galaxy you'll visit once you've poked around the Comet Observatory enough to satisfy your curiosity. You'll quickly get a taste for Super Mario Galaxy's crazy gravity—paths wrap over the edge of a planetoid then twist and turn into deep space, for instance. In addition, you'll learn to understand the warning signs for when you can't walk freely off the edge of a planetoid.

Large locations such as Good Egg Galaxy have multiple missions that will each lead you to a star; a path to a new star opens up once you've completed a mission. In addition, there are hidden stars for you to discover, but they're not easy to find—the enormous worlds provide plenty of hiding places for you to search.

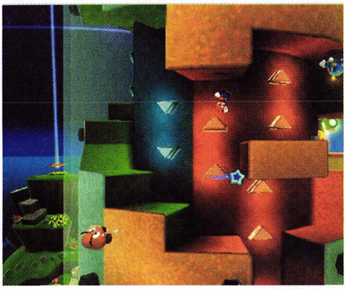
You can open up new galaxies once you've collected enough stars. If you're stumped on a particular mission, you might still have enough stars to head to the next area—the stage-select map shows how many stars you need to acquire to open up a new galaxy.



Get a feel for walking and for jumping over, under, and around the planets on Good Egg Galaxy.



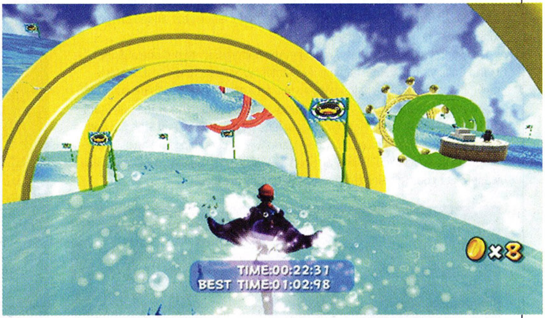
Look for hungry Lumas to feed Star Bits to—if the Lumas get enough to eat, they'll open up new areas for you to explore.



The gravity is all sorts of messed up inside the transparent, capsule-shaped planetoid.

LOOPDEELOOP GALAXY

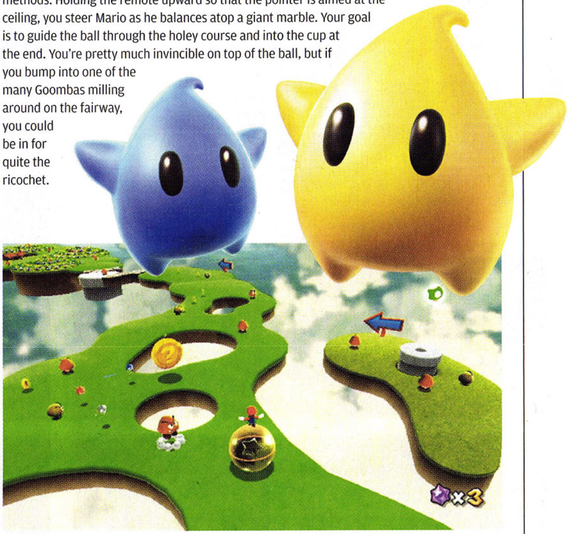
In addition to large galaxies such as Good Egg Galaxy, there are smaller, challenge-oriented galaxies for you to tackle. The first small galaxy on your adventure is Loopdeeloop Galaxy, a figure-eight-shaped track filled to the brim with turbulent water, where you'll conduct a thrilling race against the clock on the back of a smooth-sailing manta ray. The challenge showcases how Super Mario Galaxy uses the Wii remote in a variety of ways. No need for the nunchuk here—to steer, you simply rotate the Wii remote from side to side. You can also hop over choppy waves by flicking the controller upward. Although you'll receive only one star for nailing a top time, you can go back and try to beat your best time as often as you like.



There aren't any edges along the course—one big wave and you're in for quite a spill.

ROLLING GREEN GALAXY

Mario takes a page from his sporting life on Rolling Green Galaxy. The golf-course-shaped islands floating on the clouds provide the opportunity to show off another of the Wii's control methods. Holding the remote upward so that the pointer is aimed at the ceiling, you steer Mario as he balances atop a giant marble. Your goal is to guide the ball through the holey course and into the cup at the end. You're pretty much invincible on top of the ball, but if you bump into one of the many Goombas milling around on the fairway, you could be in for quite the ricochet.



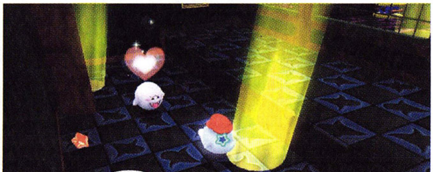
Fore! Given the time Mario has spent on the links in his own golf games, snagging the star on Rolling Green Galaxy should be a hole-in-one.

GHOSTLY GALAXY

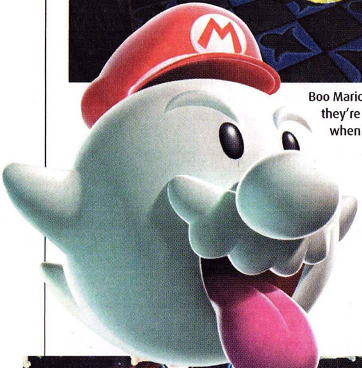
It's surprising how Mario's scaredy-cat little brother, Luigi, keeps finding himself in the spookiest places. Ghostly Galaxy is packed with giant Boos, trap doors, and one green-suspendered, knee-trembling sibling. But saving his bacon is worth the effort–once you get Luigi safely back to the Comet Observatory, he'll help you out in your quest to find more-tricky stars.

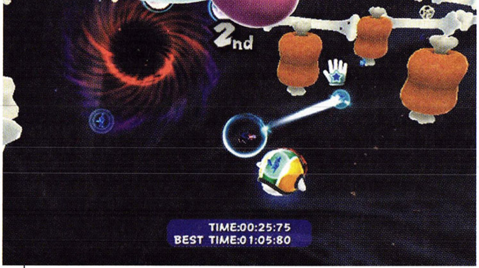
Inside the haunted mansion that dominates Ghostly Galaxy, you'll get your first opportunity to turn into Boo Mario. Like normal Boos, Boo Mario can float up to great heights, as well as disappear temporarily by shaking the Wii remote, allowing him to hide from Boos and slip through steel bars. And just like his spectral counterparts, Boo Mario hates bright light–if he gets shined on for too long, he'll revert to his normal self.

Elsewhere in Ghostly Galaxy, you'll get the opportunity to put one of Super Mario Galaxy's most entertaining new gameplay aspects to the test. A quick-moving Boo in goggles challenges you to a race across a span of blue Pull Stars. To propel Mario across the virtually empty expanse, you point at the Pull Stars and press the A Button–Mario will beam himself toward the Pull Star. But you better be careful; let go too early and Mario will go careening into an asteroid–or into deep space. You'll find Pull Stars in nearly every Galaxy, but if you really want to get good at using them, this is definitely the place.



Boo Mario attracts other Boos, but they're not gonna be happy when they catch him.

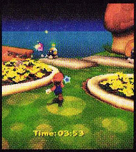




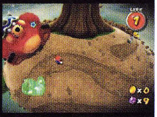
Pull Stars are really fun to negotiate, but don't dillydally—the Boo you'll race won't wait around while you practice hopping from star to star.

Prankster Comets

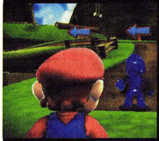
In addition to a galaxy's primary goals, there are random challenges called Prankster Comets. They get their name because they move around randomly among the galaxies. The Prankster Comets are usually snippets of larger missions, but sometimes they're completely new areas unto themselves.



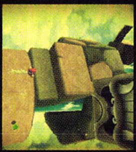
Beat the clock on timed Speedy Comet missions.



Finish Daredevil Comet missions without taking any damage.



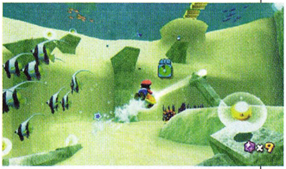
Race a shadowy doppelganger on Cosmic Comet challenges.



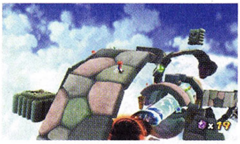
The enemies and obstacles move double-time on Fast Foe Comet challenges.

BEACH BOWL GALAXY

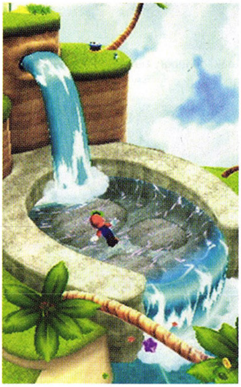
The sunny skies and sandy shores look alluring, but Beach Bowl Galaxy is no vacation. The circular sea overflows with crystal-clear water, giving Mario the perfect place to show off his natural swimming ability. Mario can't hold his breath forever, but picking up coins and air bubbles will refill his air supply. When Mario really needs to move underwater quickly, he can pick up a Koopa shell to speed through the depths. He can then launch the shell at enemies or treasure boxes with a quick flick of the Wii remote. Don't forget about that whole gravity thing–you'll find places in Beach Bowl Galaxy where the water rises to the ceiling, as well as a remote cylindrical planetoid with perilous spinning platforms.



Grab onto a Koopa shell to zip across the ocean at full speed, then shake the remote to chuck the shell away.



Rocket above Beach Bowl Galaxy's serene waters to face a Thwomp gauntlet.



Get an aerial view of your surroundings when you launch above the bowl.

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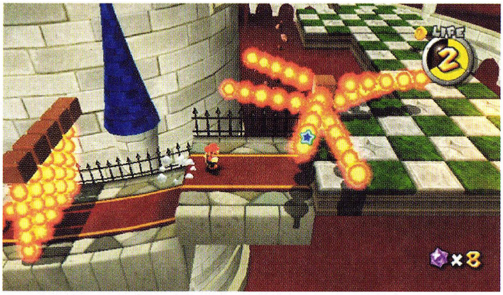
(s07)

BOWSER'S STAR REACTOR

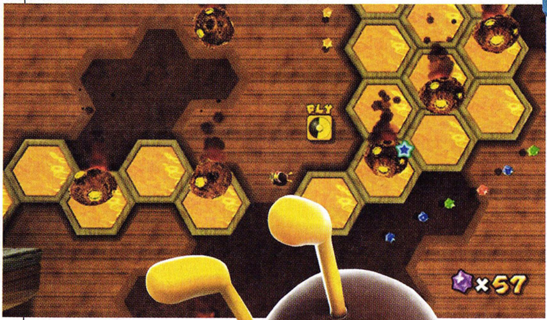
As you might expect, you'll encounter Bowser and his kin from time to time, holed up in a treacherous galaxy. Bowser's Star Reactor is one such galaxy, and it's a doozy—crazy pseudo-side-scrolling portions give you that old-school Super Mario Bros. vibe, but as soon as the gravity starts playing tricks on you, you better bust out some new-school platforming skills.



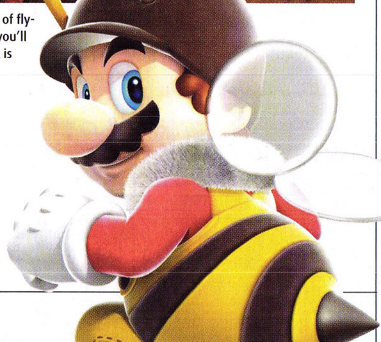
Don't be fooled—Super Mario Galaxy can be tough, especially when Bowser knows you're hot on his tail.

HONEYCLIMB GALAXY

Bee Mario might be able to fly to great heights, but it's his sticky feet that will get him up the side of the giant honeycomb. However, it looks like Mario's not alone in his ability to cling to walls—he'll have to buzz around the hard-shelled beetles that would rather gobble up Mario than snack on the walls made of sweet honey. Like many of the galaxies, Honeyclimb Galaxy offers rewards for daring and adventurous explorers.



As soon as you get a taste of flying around as Bee Mario, you'll understand what the buzz is all about.

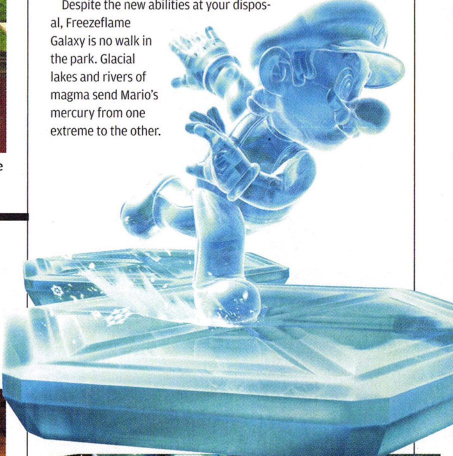


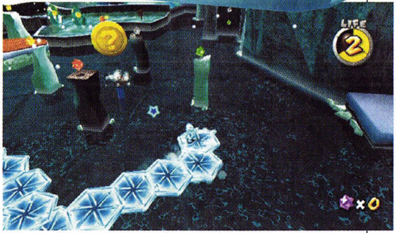
FREEZEFLAME GALAXY

For the first time since Mario went 3-D, the Fire Flower is back. Pick it up first in Freezeflame Galaxy and start blasting a path through enemies you weren't able to defeat before. You can also use fireballs to light torches, which open paths to new areas. Tossing fireballs is a snap, literally—flick the Wii remote toward your intended target to launch a fireball.

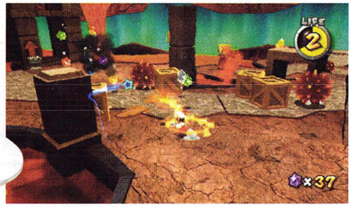
As the name suggests, Freezeflame Galaxy doesn't feature only the Fire Flower, but an Ice Flower, as well. When you become Ice Mario, you'll create icy pads that allow you to walk across the top of both chilled water and lava. But there's a catch to both the Fire Flower and the Ice Flower—you'll get to enjoy their skills for only a brief period of time.

Despite the new abilities at your disposal, Freezeflame Galaxy is no walk in the park. Glacial lakes and rivers of magma send Mario's mercury from one extreme to the other.





You'll be Ice Mario for only a limited time, so you'll need to find solid land before you sploosh into the frigid water.



Fire Mario's fireballs can not only destroy enemies; they can break wooden boxes and light torches.

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(s07)

Treasure Trove

As acclaimed development studio Treasure prepares an embarrassment of riches for Nintendo platforms, we have a chat with the man in charge, Masato Maegawa.

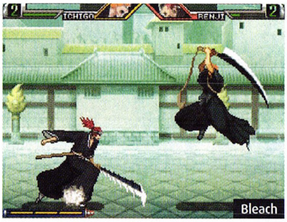
By Steve Thomason

Bleach

Nintendo Power: Between Yu Yu Hakusho, Astro Boy, and now Bleach, Treasure has a history of making critically acclaimed titles based on anime and manga franchises. What's it like working on such properties? Do you have to change your approach to development at all?
Masato Maegawa: There isn't a lot of difference between putting original versus established characters into a game. If something isn't going to translate well into an action or fighting game, we just won't do it. Even for established IPs, we're serious about making games with originality.

NP: Were there certain elements inherent to the Bleach franchise that you felt were important to showcase in the game?
MM: With an established IP, we make sure we're pleasing the fans of the original work first, and then try to create something with a lot of originality.

NP: Which titles had the Bleach team worked on previously? Were they fans of the anime and manga?
MM: Most of us worked on the Astro Boy portable game. While we weren't all necessarily Bleach fans to begin with, we read the manga and watched the anime over and over again to get a sense of the storyline. We were also given lots of information from the original creator and anime staff, and in the end became more knowledgeable than most on the anime. I'd say by now we're great fans of Bleach.



Bleach

NP: What are your thoughts on Wii thus far, and do you have any projects planned for the console?
MM: We already have some work underway with the Wii but couldn't make any announcements just yet. We do plan to put more resources into Wii development in the future.

NP: Sin and Punishment is about to debut on the Virtual Console in the US. What are your thoughts about the game finally becoming available to the US audience?
MM: This is a title we originally wanted Americans to be able to play too, so we're really happy to hear this. The game really shows what Treasure can do, so we'd love people to play it.

NP: When we spoke a couple of years ago, you mentioned that you would like to do a sequel to Sin and Punishment. Has the team given any more thought to that? And don't you think it would be a perfect fit for Wii?
MM: When we were originally working on Sin and Punishment, there was some discussion utilizing Wii-like controls, and I think now that we're working more with the Wii, it is something we'd very much like to try.

NP: You just announced a new Bangai-O for DS. What made the team want to return to that particular series?
MM: Bangai-O is a series that we felt we could do a lot with. There are a lot of elements that did not appear in the original, and we really wanted to give it another try.

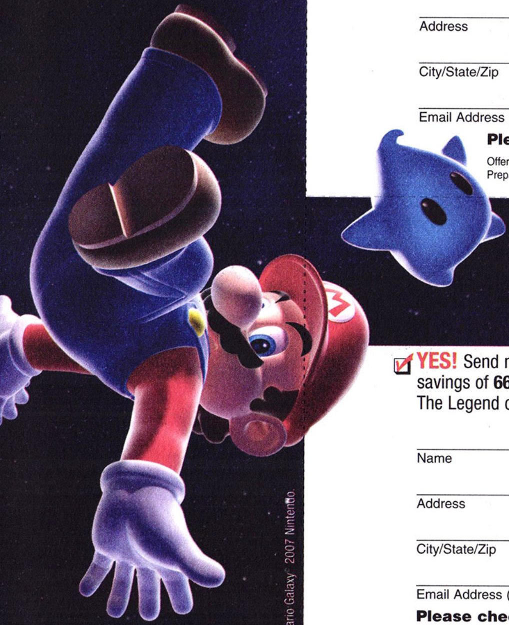
NP: Why did you decide to make the game for DS?
MM: We are keeping the core concept of Bangai-O but building it around use of the touch screen and stylus.

NP: What are some of the most exciting new features in Bangai-O Spirits?
MM: Four-player simultaneous play, map construction, more variety of opponents, more player weapons, etc. We're looking at a lot of new and innovative ideas for functionality as well.

NP: Have you been in talks with any publishers about bringing Bangai-O Spirits to the US?
MM: Yes, that discussion is already proceeding.

NP: Treasure is responsible for some of the most beloved shooters in gaming. Does the company have a general philosophy for the genre that it always follows?
MM: Even when rendering the environment and

Achieve Maximum Power



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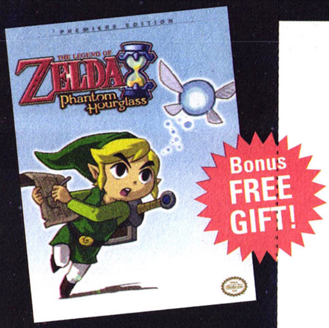

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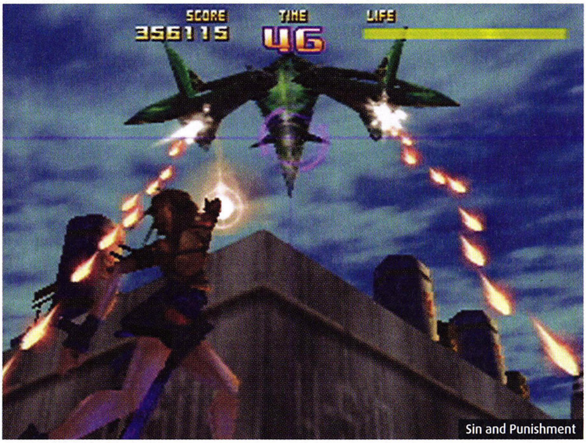


Sin and Punishment

characters in 3-D, you have to pay a lot of attention to the same collision issues found in 2-D games. Without losing the fun of those 2-D shooting games, we work to create something with the visual impact of 3-D.

NP: Sadly, shooters aren't as popular as they once were. Why do you think that is?
MM: People say that but I don't think it's true. Despite being an original shooting game, Ikaruga sold more than 150,000 copies, and more well-known games like Gradius V have sold even more. The most popular shooters tend to be more difficult, ultimately limiting players, but shooters are an established genre and I don't think they've lost much popularity.

NP: You've said that you always let team members decide which game they want to make. What have they been telling you that they'd like to tackle next?
MM: The individual members all have their own opinions but I think the general consensus is that we'd like to create something new and original.

NP: Are there any other existing franchises, like Dynamite Headdy or Guardian Heroes, that the team has been anxious to revisit?
MM: I wouldn't say that necessarily.

NP: Last time we spoke, you said that you would love to create games in different genres, such as an RPG, but that it was difficult because the company is pretty small. Is there any chance you could collaborate with another developer to create an RPG, sort of like what Mistwalker did with Blue Dragon? We'd really love to see what Treasure could do with that genre.
MM: I think it's possible, and we've had such offers, but our programmers always want to know "can we create what we want to create?" Therein lies the biggest difficulty for any project.

NP: Recently, casual games have been dominating the market in Japan. Why do you think that is? And as the head of a company that focuses on hardcore games, does it worry you?
MM: Casual games are an important part of the industry, as long as they're fun. Players who just want to jump right into a game can be put off by more-complex games. Personally, I don't have much interest in anything apart from hard-core games, but I don't have any concerns about the growing casual game market. The need for old-school games will always be there.

NP: Over the past few years, most of Treasure's titles have been for handhelds. Is that a trend that fans should continue to expect, or will we see more console games from the company moving forward?
MM: We plan to put a lot of energy into balancing the two. But since it is just not possible for us to work on every platform, we're currently focusing on the DS for handhelds and the Wii and Xbox 360 for consoles.

NP: When last we spoke, you mentioned that all 10 original members of Treasure were still with the company. Is there something about the work environment that inspires such loyalty and creativity? How do you think it differs from the work environment at other game publishers?
MM: Our company's philosophy is "complete freedom." We have created an environment where all team members can express themselves freely and create the games they want. This is what inspires loyalty and creativity within the company.

NP: What would you say is the essence, or the most important element, of a Treasure title?
MM: That we have the creative freedom to make the games we want.

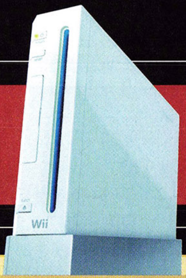
NP: Thanks so much for your time. Is there anything else you'd like to say to your fans in the US?
MM: We know our company has a lot of fans in the US and it makes us very happy. Treasure wouldn't be anything without the fans so we hope you'll continue to support us in the future.

Bangai-O Spirits

C Classified Info

Nobody likes a cheater. Except us.

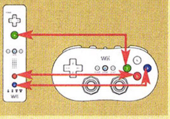
NINTENDO Wii VIRTUAL CONSOLE EDITION



As Wii's Virtual Console library continues to grow, so does our supply of vintage Classified Information cheats. Relive the good old days with this issue's batch of NES, Sega Genesis, and TurboGrafx16 codes.

Take Control

The codes listed on these pages are intended for use with Classic or GCN controllers, but you can enter the codes using the Wii remote instead—substitute A for Y, 1 for B, 2 for A, – for Select, and + for Start.



METROID™

NES

Secret Passwords

Samus's original adventure was one of her toughest. Enter these classic passwords at the password screen to give the bounty hunter an edge.

Play as unmasked Samus with almost all equipment:

`JUSTIN BAILEY`
`------ ------`

Invincibility and infinite missiles:

`NARPAS SWORD0`
`000000 000000`

SUPER C™

NES

The alien invaders must be stopped! Increase your forces by acquiring extra lives, or just chill out to the game's soundtrack.

10 Lives

At the title screen press right, left, down, up, A, and B. Press Select if you wish to begin a two-player game, then start the game. You'll begin with 10 lives instead of three.

Sound Mode

Hold A and B, then press Start at the title screen. You'll be able to listen to all the game's music and sound effects.

DEVIL'S CRUSH™

TurboGrafx16

Infinite Balls

Devil's Crush is one of the best console pinball games ever created, and you can extend the fun by giving yourself an endless supply of balls. At the password screen, input PPPPPPPPPA and begin the game. You'll never run out of balls no matter how many you lose.

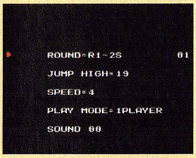
BONK II™

Bonk's Big Adventure

TurboGrafx16

Cheat Menu

Bonk's Big Adventure is big trouble, but you can gain some relief by accessing a cheat menu. At the Mode Select screen, highlight Quit, then hold down-left, A, and B, and press Start. You'll enter a screen where you can choose your level, adjust your jump height, and more.



```
ROUND=R1-2S          01
JUMP HIGH=19
SPEED=4
PLAY MODE=1PLAYER
SOUND 00
```

NEUTOPIA II™

TurboGrafx16

Secret Passwords

You can experience the sights and sounds of fantasy adventure Neutopia II any time you want by entering these passwords.

Sound Test:

Music_From_Neutopia

Enemy Viewer:

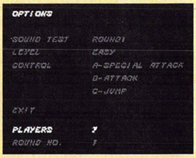
Thats_Entertainment_Neutopia

STREETS OF RAGE™

Genesis

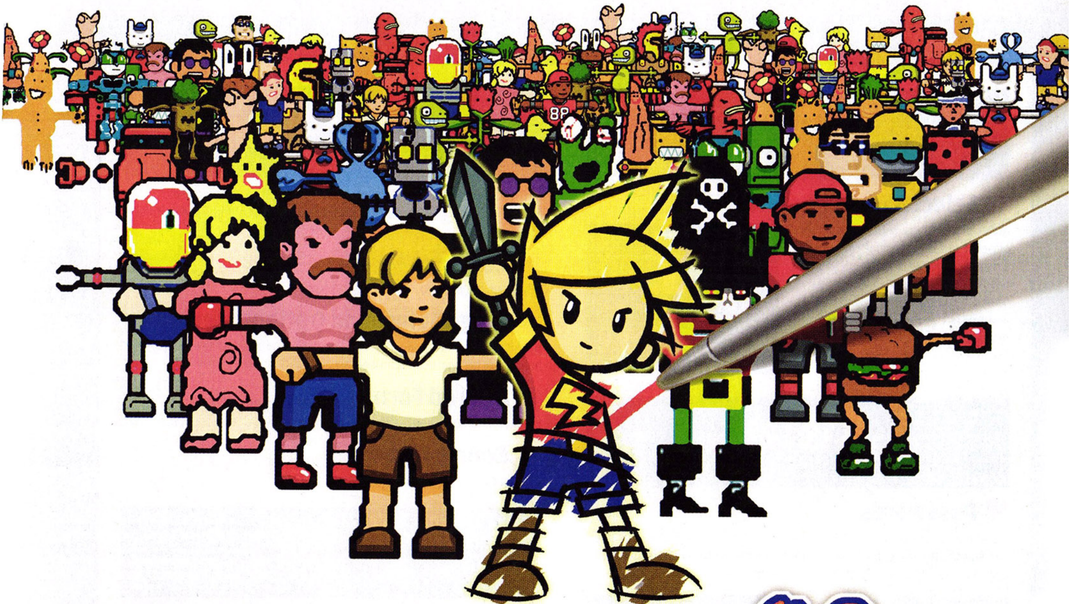
Round Select and Extra Lives

Three ex-cops are risking their lives on the streets of rage; help 'em out with some extra options. With a second controller activated, highlight Options at the menu screen, then hold right, Y, B, and A on controller 2, and enter the option screen using controller 1. Options for your starting round and number of lives will now be selectable.



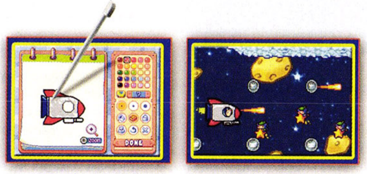
```
OPTIONS

SOUND TEST      ROUND1
LEVEL           EASY
CONTROL         A-SPECIAL ATTACK
                B-ATTACK
                C-JUMP

EXIT

PLAYERS         7
ROUND NO.       1
```

Your Hero. Your Adventure.

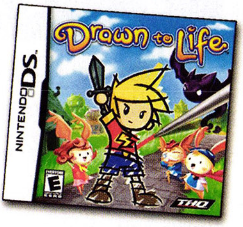


Drawn to Life™

Draw your own Hero, and then fly, swim and smash through exciting worlds!



Design vehicles, weapons, tools and more to assist you on your quest!



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Classified Info

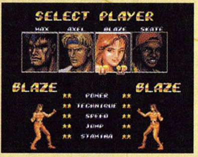
Nobody likes a cheater. Except us.

STREETS OF RAGE 2

Genesis

Select Same Character

Attack of the clones! With this code, both players can select the same character in a two-player game (so naturally you'll need a second controller). At the title screen, hold right and B on controller 1, and hold left and Y on controller 2, then press A on controller 2.



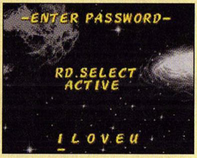
Ristar

Genesis

Passwords

Ristar has extendable arms and courage on his side—and he's also got secret passwords with a variety of benefits. Go to the password screen from the option menu and enter any of the following passwords.

Level Select: ILOVEU
True Vision: MIEMIE
Time Attack: DOFEEL
Boss Rush Mode: MUSEUM
Super Difficulty: SUPERB



SHINOBI III

Return of the Ninja Master

Genesis

You need a lot of training to become a ninja master—or you can just use these codes. With infinite shuriken and endless health, you'll be unstoppable.

Infinite Shuriken

Enter the options screen and set the sound effect (SE) option to Shurikin, then set the Shurikins option to 00. After a few seconds, the 00 will change to an infinity sign, indicating you have infinite shuriken.

Invincibility

Go to the options screen's music test and play the following tracks in order by pressing the B Button: He Runs, Japonesque, Shinobi Walk, Sakura, and Getufu. Exit the options screen and start the game; you'll be invincible.

獣王記 ALTERED BEAST

Genesis

Rise from your grave! With this wide array of codes at your disposal, you'll have no trouble rescuing Zeus's daughter from the evil Neff. Enter the codes at the title screen.

Continue

After your game's over, hold Y and press Start.

Stage Select and Options Menu

Hold B and press Start. After choosing your level and other options, hold Y and press Start to begin on the chosen stage.

Altered Forms Menu

Hold down-left, Y, B, and A, then press Start.

Sound Test

Hold up-right, Y, and A, then press Start.

GHOULS'N GHOSTS

Genesis

Just when Arthur thought he'd saved the world from demons in Ghosts 'n Goblins, they returned for more in Ghouls 'n Ghosts—but you can finish them off by using these codes.

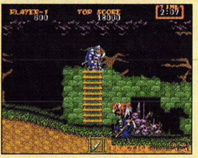
Level Select

At the title screen, press up, down, left, right. A chime will sound to indicate you've entered the code correctly. Hold the buttons corresponding to the desired level (as listed below), then press Start.

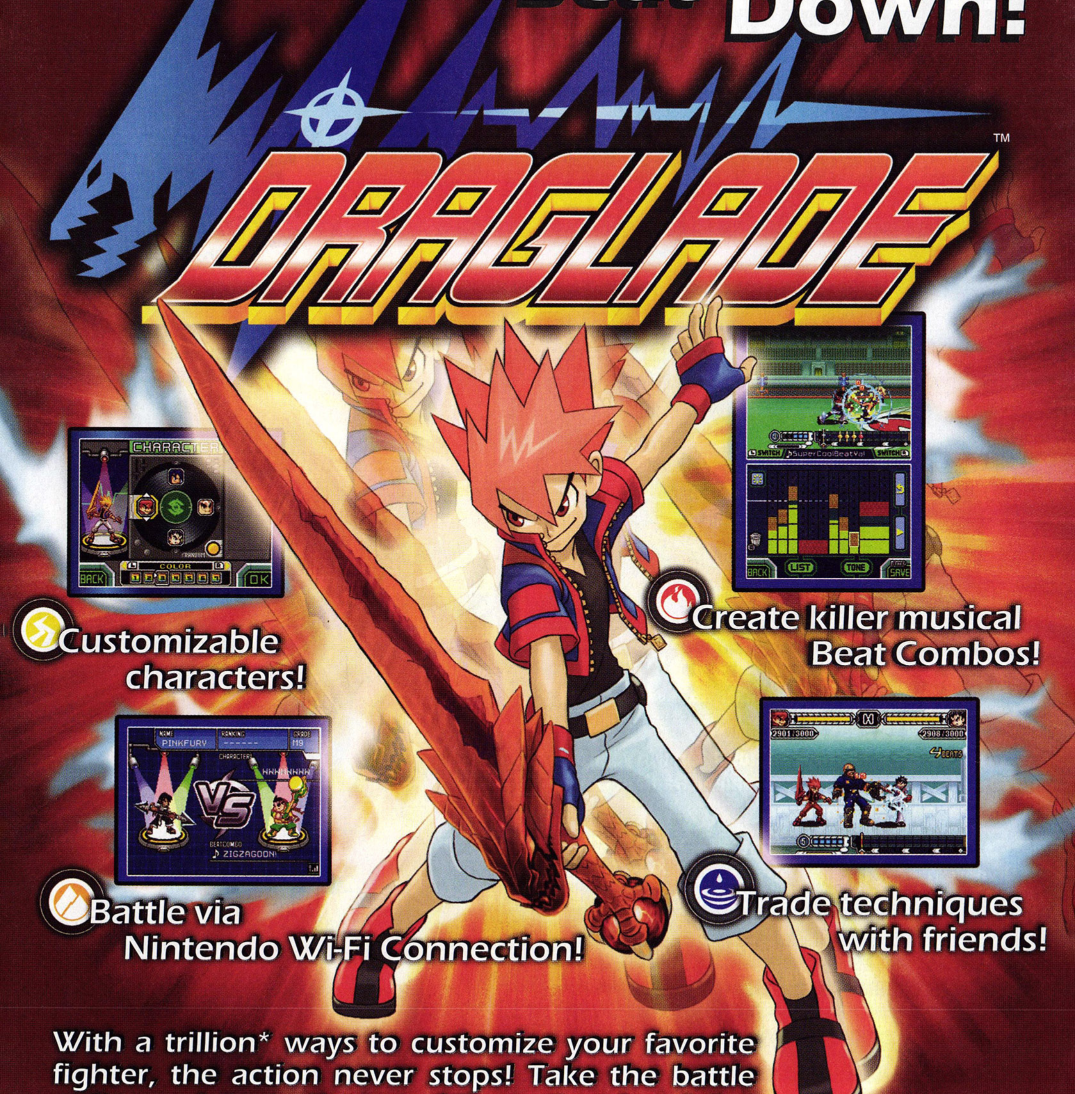
Level 1-2: Y
Level 2-1: Up
Level 2-2: Up and Y
Level 3-1: Down
Level 3-2: Down and Y
Level 4-1: Left
Level 4-2: Left and Y
Level 5-1: Right
Level 5-2: Right and Y
Final Boss: Down-right

Invincibility

At the title screen, press Y, Y, Y, Y, up, down, left, right. A chime will sound if you've entered the code correctly. Begin the game, then pause the action by pressing Start, and press the Y Button. When you unpause the game, you'll be invincible. You'll also be able to play the game in slow motion if you hold B or tap A while the game is paused.



Deliver The Beat Down!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CHARACTER
COLOR
BACK
OK
Customizable characters!
SWITCH
SuperCoolBeatVol
LIST
TONE
SAVE
Create killer musical Beat Combos!
NAME
PINKFURY
RANKING
GRADE
M9
VS
BEATCOMBO
ZIGZAGOON
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EVERYONE 10+
Cartoon Violence
Mild Language
Mild Suggestive Themes
Use of Tobacco
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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SWEEPSTAKES
December 2007

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1. No purchase is necessary to win and as a contestant you have not yet won. Entries must be received no later than December 1, 2007. The winners will be chosen on or about, December 17, 2007, and will be notified by e-mail (or regular mail). The odds of winning depend upon the number of entries received. The sponsor of the contest is Future US, Inc. ("Future US"), 4000 Shoreline Court, South San Francisco, CA 94080). Future US, Inc. cannot be responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or incomplete entries, nor shall it be liable for unsuccessful efforts to notify a winner.

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5. Entrants must be at least 13 years of age. If a winner is a minor, the prize will be awarded in the name of winner's parent or legal guardian, who is solely responsible for all applicable federal, state and local taxes, and that winner must also provide a signed parental or guardian consent form, provided by the sponsor, within 7 days of notification attempt. Failure of the minor to return the guardian consent form will result in the forfeiture of the prize and selection of an alternate winner, who will be chosen through a random drawing from the remaining eligible entries.

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7. The winners may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within seven days of receipt; failure to do so upon request will result in forfeiture of the prize. By acceptance of the prize, the winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Winners are responsible for paying any income taxes on the value of the prize received.

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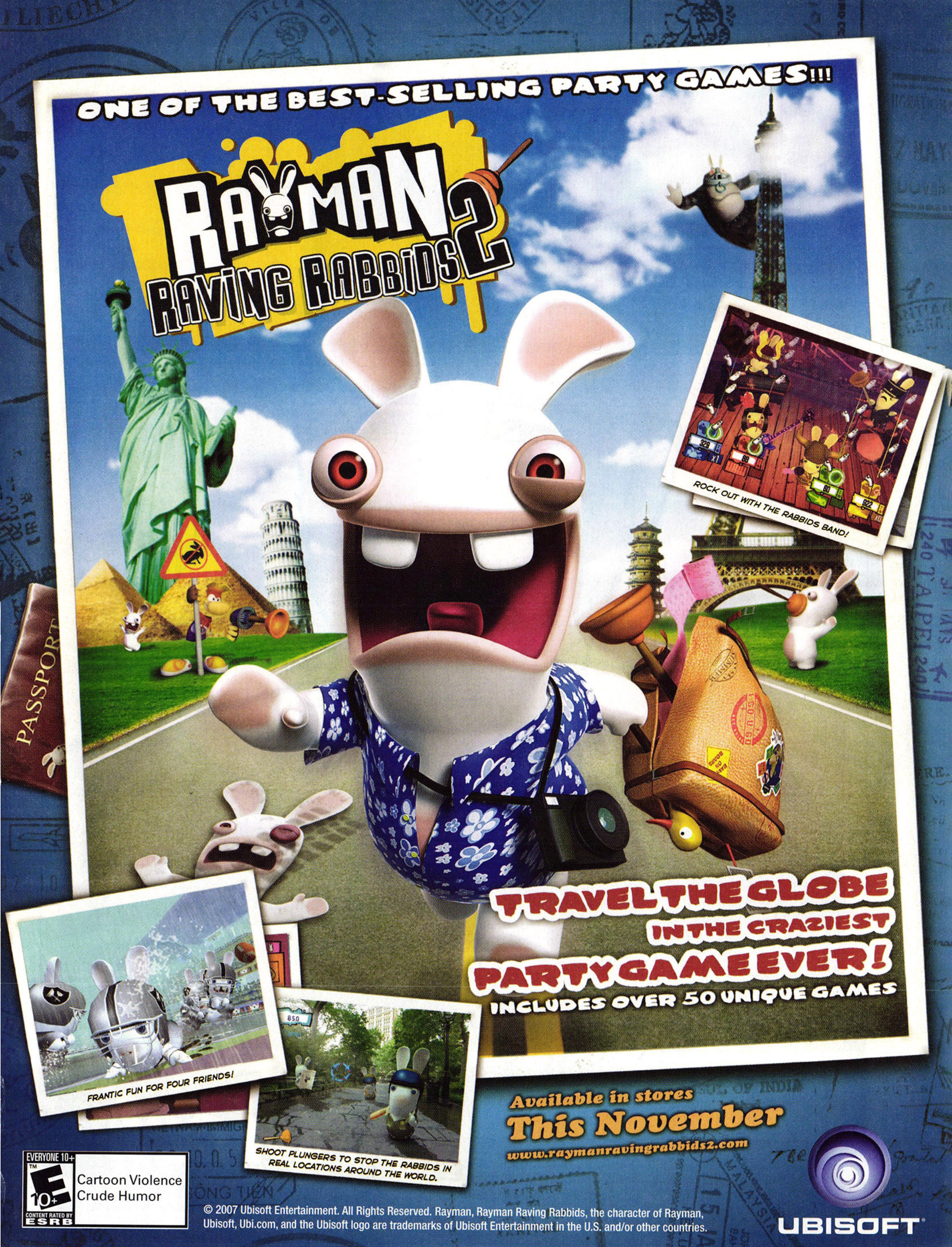
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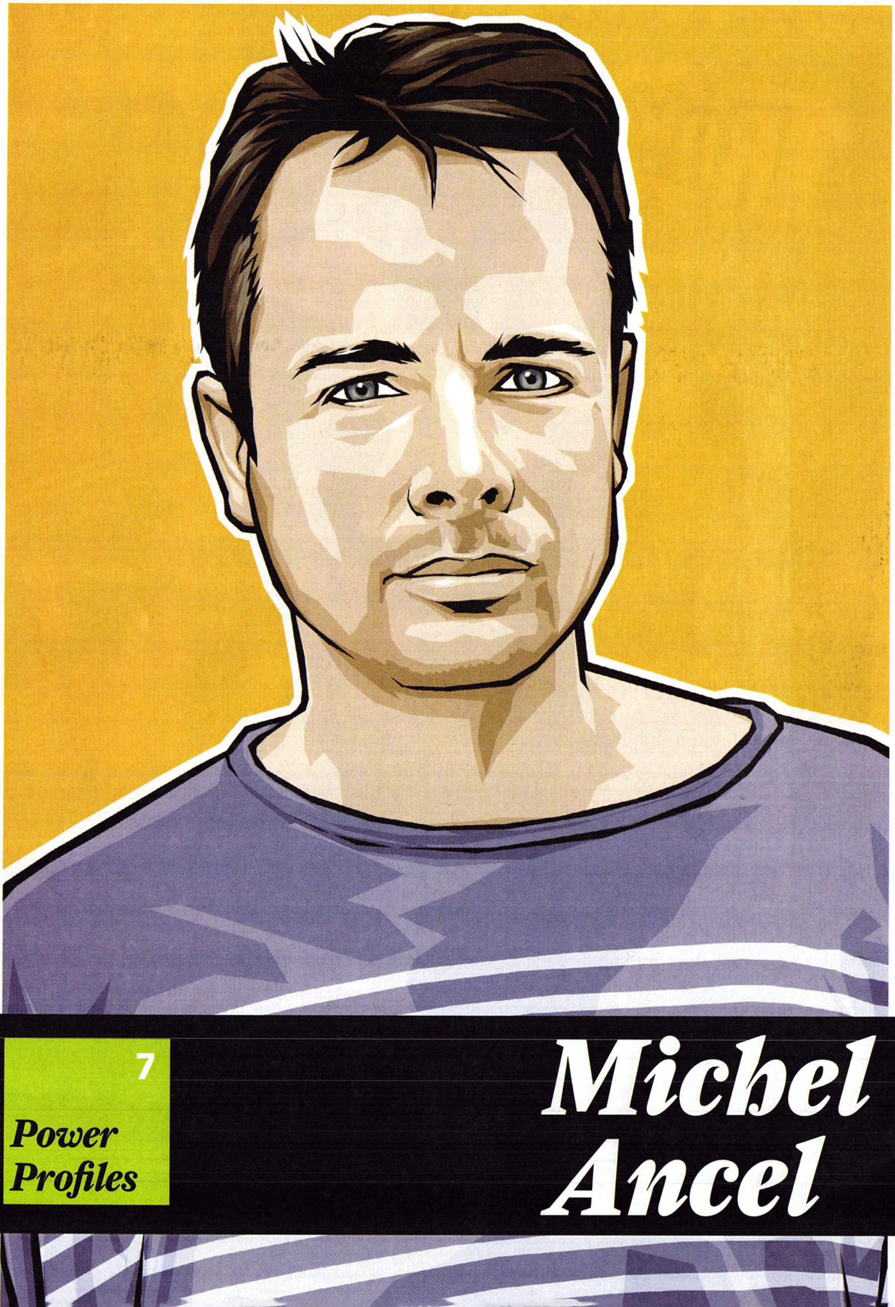


7

Power Profiles

Michel Ancel

In the ongoing debate over whether video games should be considered art, the works of Michel Ancel make a strong case for the affirmative. They may not be as well-known as the Grand Theft Autos and Final Fantasies of the world, but those who have played Rayman 2 or Beyond Good & Evil can attest to their ability to captivate you every bit as much as a great movie or novel.

Ancel seems especially interested in (and adept at) exploring what makes video games a unique form of expression: immersive worlds that players can explore and truly feel a part of, as well as the emotional attachments that result from interacting with the inhabitants of those worlds. He's not afraid to take risks, and constantly endeavors to push the medium into new territory. (Kind of sounds like an artist, huh?) Last year, Ancel was knighted into the Order of Arts and Literature in France, one of only two game developers ever granted such an honor (the other was Shigeru Miyamoto). His current project remains a closely held secret, but we're anxious to see where this talented creator will take us next.

It also bears mentioning that Ancel possesses a bizarre sense of humor, as evidenced in the following interview.

date of birth:
March 29, 1972

birthplace:
Monaco

position:
Creative director at Ubisoft Montpellier

best known for:
Creating Rayman; taunting Beyond Good & Evil fans with that cliffhanger ending

favorite food:
The little grilled bits that you find at the bottom of a frying pan after you've cooked up a nice meal

current projects:
Unknown

Nintendo Power: Can you tell us how you got into the video game business?

Michel Ancel: Honestly, when I was 8, I dreamt of a portable colorful object full of cartoons that I could jump into and live a load of adventures. I think my passion came from this type of vision. Since then I try to make games that are as immersive and fun as possible.

NP: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

MA: Golderak, a normal guy who lives a double life and flies a giant robot. I thought it would be a good way to meet the ladies!

NP: How has the video game industry changed since you've been involved with it? And how has your role changed within the industry?

MA: Nothing has changed really; we're still digging away to find that new idea. Even though things have become more complex, especially in terms of technology and team organization, essentially we still create the ideas in the same way!

NP: What aspect of creating a game do you enjoy most?

MA: When all of the different crafts put their work together and finally the game begins to emerge. Your characters come to life and speak . . . the world becomes interactive and immersive. Sometimes it's something that happens in a couple of days after months of preparation. There are also phases where you freely experiment with gameplay and during which you really have fun. Then you have the final polishing and debugging phase, which is often much more arduous and tiring.

NP: Where did you get your inspiration when creating the original Rayman?

MA: Maybe a mix of magic vegetables and a wild imagination! Rayman was created in a really instinctive way, without any real deep or profound thought. I was trying to escape the grey concrete and smog of big-city life and I imagined this character and his colorful universe, from which I created a little playable demo using my basic programming skills. It's funny to see a crazy teenage idea turn into such a success!

NP: Beyond Good & Evil puts a lot of emphasis on telling a story, while Rayman Raving Rabbids focuses almost entirely on gameplay. Which type of game are you most interested in making moving forward?

MA: Definitely games that are fun and captivating. As a creator, you are always very attracted to the reactions of the player regardless of the type of game. We want to capture them, please them, and even torture them a little. It's kind of a sadistic job in many ways.

I am currently working on a game that means a lot to me, where the foundation is immersion and a sense of incredible journey. The new consoles have really opened many possibilities to new types of games that are beautiful and gripping. But we should never forget that you can have games that are extremely fascinating without focusing solely on the gameplay. Ico is a great example of this! We all love to let ourselves go and be taken to fantastic worlds, rediscovering the feelings of our childhood, when we would snuggle up to the side of the bed listening to a story with our eyes and ears wide open. Don't get me wrong—this doesn't mean that games that are 100% gameplay can't be fun. They are simply different categories and it's best to have both.

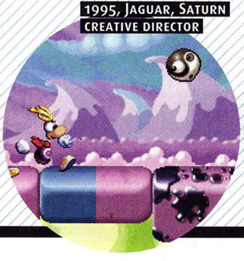
NP: One of the reasons that Beyond Good & Evil stands out for a lot of people is that it's one of the few video games that really tackles political and social issues. Why don't we see more of that in this industry?

MA: Absolutely, I think the industry is still a little timid! Other forms of media—literature, cinema, and art—have been experimenting through their creators with the human condition and society as a whole. Games are still stammering somewhat in their true creative expression. I believe by truly mastering our core profession we will rectify many of the issues in terms of interface, technique, and

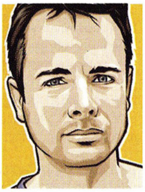
GAMEOGRAPHY

Ancel came up with the idea for Rayman, and was the creative director on the first two games in the franchise, but he had almost no involvement with Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc. That might explain why it wasn't very good.

RAYMAN
1995, JAGUAR, SATURN
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE
2000, DREAMCAST
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



> *"A good idea needs to be defended, so you have to turn it on its head, spin it different ways, and try everything possible to realize it."*

gameplay. Unfortunately, we often try to rehash the same old recipes and we really need to get past this in order to really progress.

NP: Jade (from Beyond Good & Evil) is on a very short list of interesting female protagonists in video games. Can you talk a bit about the creation of that character?

MA: The basic idea was to express a certain femininity and to avoid the cliché of the good-looking chick with the brain of Action Man. Hence the idea of making her camera her most powerful weapon; it's really not easy to build a character that doesn't express herself with the traditional weapons, objects, or special powers that are in 90 percent of games today. I really hope that Jade will continue to keep her values and her personality.

NP: What are your thoughts on video games as a storytelling medium? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the medium?

MA: The main disadvantage is the interface, man to machine, which means a return to only basic interaction. For example, a kiss is impossible, as is a real discussion. As a result, everything must pass through systems of actions that form a restrictive vocabulary in order to go further into the spectrum of emotions. Or alternatively you can use cinematics, but then you lose the interaction and return to the passive system that's basically a more passive film experience. The interfaces we use are still fairly prehistoric. That doesn't stop a game from allowing us to live incredible experiences, but it's still too limiting. I think some of the research into interfaces, AI, voice recognition, and voice synthesizing will start to open even more creative possibilities. Until then, online games already allow immersion and the possibility of living amazing experiences, due to the human-to-human interaction . . . but there is still much to be done.

NP: What are the biggest differences between working on a licensed property like King Kong and working on something of your own creation?

MA: For me personally there is not that much difference. I have a lot of affection for King Kong, even if I feel as though we needed another year to make a truly fantastic game. Perhaps that is the disadvantage with licensed games—you don't always have enough time to really fine-tune and polish the game to the highest level achievable.

NP: Would you ever like to make another Rayman platformer?

MA: YES! I think we can still surprise people even if this genre seems to be a little out of breath. I have tons of ideas, but I haven't figured out yet how to clone myself, so I always end up having more ideas than time to develop them all.

NP: When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?

MA: I usually try to simplify the problem to get back to the core of the idea. From that I reconstruct a new process attempting to conserve the core idea. There is nothing worse then losing the sense of an idea because of technical difficulties. A good idea needs to be defended, so you have to turn it on its head, spin it different ways, and basically try everything possible to realize it. If I run across a problem on a less important idea, then I just change the idea!

NP: What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect?

MA: I have no idea why, but I love games like The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and Out of this World. These are a bit old-school now, but they really had a profound impact on my experience as a gamer.

NP: Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?

MA: I am a fan of the comic-book author Joann Sfar. He works to a very broad and varied audience with wisdom, humor, and an intelligence that really takes me away. He shows that creativity is alchemy on a human scale. His style is clean, and it goes to the essential without trying to be sophisticated or seductive. At first look, you might think that this work is naïve, but really it's just the opposite. He treats themes that are often taboo, like sex or religion, and really takes off into all kinds of exploration. Because of his popular and incisive style, for me, he is one of the greatest authors of the century.

NP: What are some of your favorite nongaming hobbies or pastimes?

MA: I like to explore nature, watching people and plants grow, exploring seabeds and watching ant farms. There are visual events permanently taking place around us that offer a unique spectacle for our eyes—we just have to take the time to observe them.

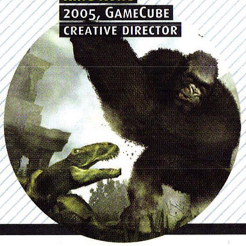
NP: What would you like to be remembered for 50 years from now?

MA: Nothing really—I don't have that sort of ambition. I see myself more as an author of ephemeral works. I try to give something to gamers, but it's not a precise message. It's more about providing a good time and perhaps gamers might get something from it that is interesting and can be applied to everyday life.

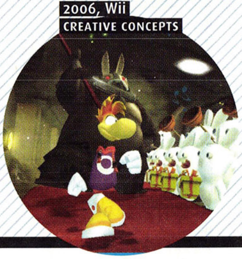
NP: If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

MA: I'd like to live as long as possible so I can continue to explore our real world, which is so interesting, but also imaginary worlds that games allow us to render so credible and substantial.

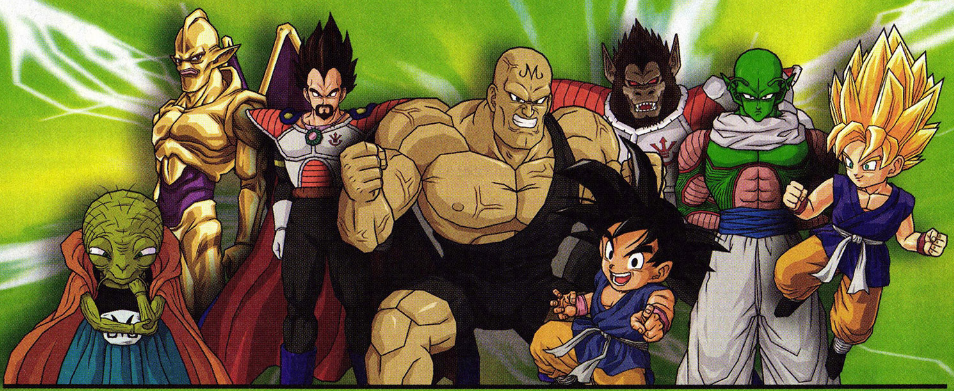
Beyond Good & Evil
2003, GameCube
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Peter Jackson's King Kong
2005, GameCube
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Rayman Raving Rabbids
2006, Wii
CREATIVE CONCEPTS



Introducing, among other things, some people you haven't had a chance to punch in the face yet.

1409
134
89
HITS!
350

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 3

This may be the greatest DBZ game of them all. There are more than 150 playable characters. Plus both consoles have exclusives. There's online play with Wii. And there's Disc Fusion on the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system, which lets you combine all three Tenkaichi games into one. Now, every character in every game is available to fight. Whatever console you have, find a friend who has the other one. Share the fight.

Wii™ FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT PlayStation®2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Cartoon Violence
Mild Language

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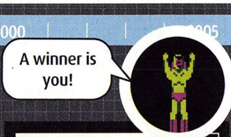
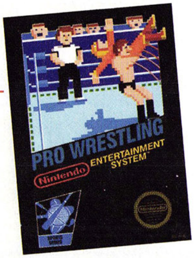
ATARI

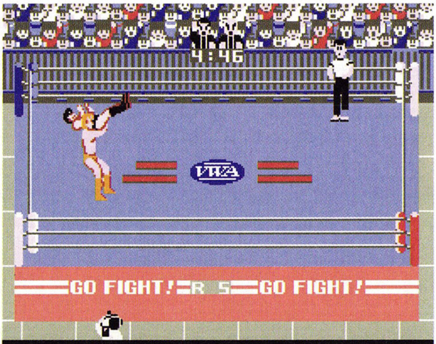

A winner is you!

PRO WRESTLING



PLATFORM: **NES**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
RELEASE DATE: **MARCH 1987**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **NONE**
NUMBER OF FISH PEOPLE: **1**

Before Ryu and Ken, Starman and Amazon showed us how cool one-on-one fighting could be.



A one-on-one fighting game where each character can perform a wide variety of moves? Groundbreaking! Well . . . for 1987, it was.

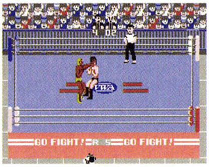
Back in the day, there were two ways to win at Nintendo's Pro Wrestling: 1) a careful strategy of varied attacks and precision timing or 2) a shameful combination of ring-out victories and the rapid-fire feature of the NES Advantage joystick. If your wrestling code of ethics is loose enough to find the latter approach acceptable, then I was the unbeatable World Grand Champion of Pro Wrestling.

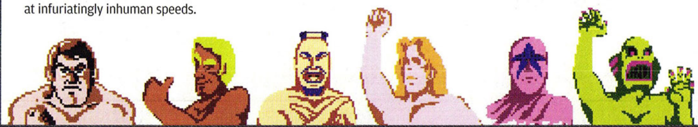
It's amazing how such a simple game—with just the one game screen, even—could keep you glued to the tube for hours. The action in Pro Wrestling was pretty complex for its time, with a much higher number of moves per character than could normally be found in other games. Keep in mind, this was before Street Fighter II rocked the world, so a one-on-one fighting game was pretty rare.

Of course, everything came down to how fast you could hit B and A, and in the higher-ranked matches, CPU opponents could beat those buttons at infuriatingly inhuman speeds. Every match lost on the ladder to the championship would send the player a match backwards, making it nearly impossible to reach the mysterious Great Puma, the VWF champion whose identity had been so tantalizingly kept secret via a silhouette with a "?" over it in the manual.

Speaking of cool characters, the game was packed with 'em: Starman, the masked space acrobat; King Slender, the VWA champ; Kin Corn Karn, master of the Mongolian Chop; Giant Panther, the former football star; and the Amazon, who was half-piranha. Oh, and the unremarkable black-trunked Fighter Hayabusa, who was unique only in that the White Pages of my North Carolina hometown listed no other Hayabusas. Seriously, what's this guy doing in a game with a space acrobat and a piranha man?

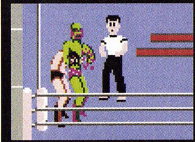
It's too bad that Pro Wrestling never had a sequel, no prettier Super NES version or N64 3-D upgrade. The only reminders that the game even existed are a quick Amazon cameo in WarioWare Twisted, and a few games that pay homage to Pro Wrestling's infamous victory phrase, "A winner is you." Ah, well—my NES still works, and so does my NES Advantage. Time to go teach Loser Hayabusa why they call him "the Amazon." —**CHRIS SL.**



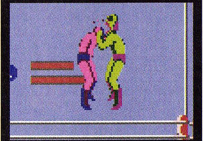


A TRIBUTE TO AMAZON

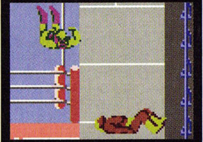
Even among the colorful cast of Pro Wrestling, Amazon stands out like a sore thumb—he's easily the game's most memorable character. The guy is basically the amphibious monster from the old horror flick *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, only in wrestling trunks. He's literally a fish out of water in the wrestling ring. Oh, and he's also a chronic cheater. Want proof? Here it is...



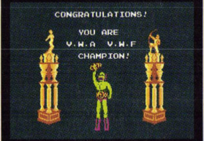
Outlaw Choke: For this move, the Amazon repeatedly stabs his opponent in the head with a fork. Make the call, ref!



Piranha Bite: Here he chomps into his opponent's head using giant, shark-like teeth! Look at those bloody pixels fly...



Over-the-Rope Splash: Okay, so the other guys do this one too, but the Amazon enjoys it more!



CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU ARE
V.W.A V.W.F
CHAMPION!

It's hard to argue with results, though. Amazon, we salute you.

Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
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-GameSpot.com

"Best Nintendo DS Game" "Best Rhythm Game"

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-GameZone.com

GAMESPOT
E3'07
EDITORS' CHOICE
FINALIST

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Comic Mischief

NINTENDO DS™

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REVIEWS

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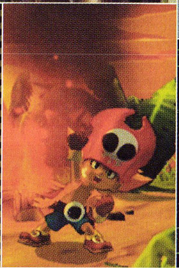
Sothe...

Fire Emblem captivates on Wii!

Battalion Wars 2, Phoenix Wright: Trials & Tribulations, Guitar Hero III, Front Mission, and more.

81
Contra 4: the mother of all shooters.

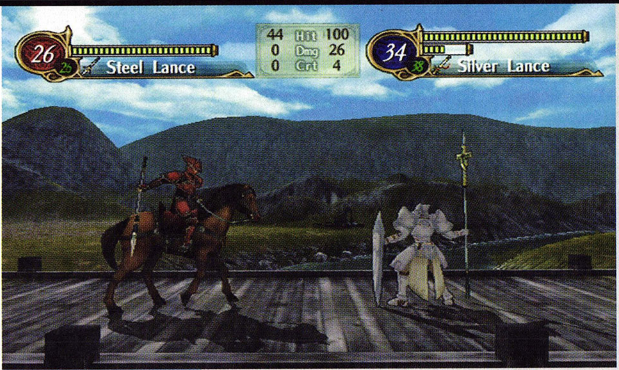
Mia
Mr. Wright...
You've been lying to me!

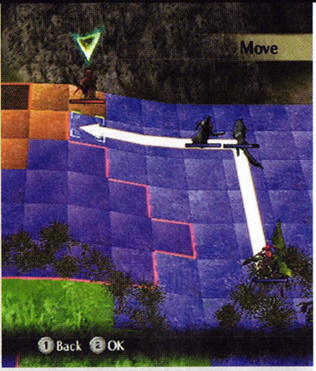


86
A pirate's life for Wii?

ALPHA - NOVICE
OPEN
620
0/3
SC
HIGH SC

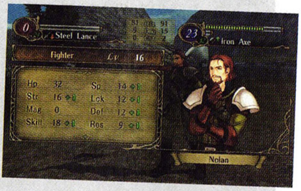
82
There's a lot of geometry in space!





A TURN-BASED TRIUMPH

RADIANT Wii



FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Here's a bit of heresy: motion controls aren't required for every Wii title, and in the case of Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn, Intelligent Systems made the right move for the tactical RPG by crafting a control scheme using the Wii remote held sideways like an NES controller. It's so simple a monkey could navigate the menus and battle commands, although said simian would have a devil of a time thinking its way through some of the fiendishly difficult scenarios that gamers will face in the 38-chapter tactical smorgasbord. What I'm getting at here is that Wii not only provides exceptional motion-based gaming experiences; it excels at elegantly simple interfaces, as well.

The Fire Emblem experience is not primarily about control, however; it's about strategy and emotional bonding with characters. Most of Radiant Dawn's characters appear in cinema scenes and animations that advance the story and as units that you control in battle. As they gain experience their abilities and attributes grow stronger. Following the heroes and heroines through their trials and guiding them through battles, you'll begin to think of them as allies. They're unique, unlike generic units in many tactical games, so when you lose a character you'll lose not only their abilities—you'll also lose a friend. It's often so gut-wrenching that you'll want to replay the mission until you emerge from the fray with your troops intact.

The game takes place against a backdrop of war and Machiavellian politics. The first of four parts begins on the continent of Tellius three years after the events of Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance for GameCube. The country of Daein has been occupied by neighboring Begnion, and General Jarod has subjected the populace to one outrage after another. A band of rebels led by Micaiah, aka The Silver-Haired Maiden, is fighting back, but they're badly outnumbered. Through heroic deeds and rumors that Micaiah is Daein's savior, the so-called Dawn Brigade gains support from the common folk and they grow in strength, finding allies in unforeseen situations. Numerous characters from Path of Radiance make appearances in greater or lesser roles as the story shifts to other nations and conflicts that are stirring within and across Tellius's borders. To preserve the surprise factor, I won't go into further plot details; suffice it to say that there are twists, betrayals, heartaches, and enough political commentary to make the 2008 presidential campaign look like a run for class president.

Which brings me to the meat of the game—the tactics. After the sneering evildoers and weeping nobles exit the cinematic stage, you'll find yourself in charge of a set number of units facing a host of bitter enemies. Each chapter has at least one mission, and the missions vary from sorties with just a few characters to major battles in which dozens of units face off. The settings and victory conditions also vary widely—in one mission you'll be tasked with rescuing prisoners from a swamp, and in another you'll have to hold a castle for 15 turns with a small force against an imposing army. You'll need to learn the strengths and weaknesses of all your varied units, as well. In Tellius, there are two main races—human Beorcs, and Laguz that transform from human shape into beasts—and it's essential to utilize each to its greatest advantage. Prior to most battles you'll have an opportunity to manage relationships, check on character readiness, supply units with new items and weapons (since weapons wear out with use), and assign skills and experience. You'll also be able to place characters (and sometimes choose which characters to use) as well as view the battle map and review the victory conditions before the action begins.

Once you're committed to a fight, there's no turning back. Fortunately, there's no time limit for making a move, and you've got excellent tools to help you plan your attack. One critical tool lets you display the attack range for every enemy you face so you can judge where to move safely. Another key consideration is knowing which attacks trump other attacks. With care and knowledge of your units, you can plan for anything—except perhaps for the assistance of allied units that you don't control directly. Although your command unit can give some direction to the CPU-controlled allies, they tend to bunch together, and sometimes they exhibit silly or suicidal moves.

If you're not familiar with the Fire Emblem series but you enjoy tactics-based games such as Advance Wars (also from Intelligent Systems and Nintendo) Final Fantasy Tactics, or Ogre Battle (for old-schoolers), then you're in for a treat. If you like using your noggin and enjoy dramatic plots, then you, too, will rejoice. And if you're already a Fire Emblem fan, prepare to be wowed. Radiant Dawn boasts excellent production values, a good 30-hour campaign (or longer if you replay missions, which you will), and more blue-haired heroes than you can shake a sword at. It's the best in its class, and motion-control or not, it's only on Wii. —**SCOTT P.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT GAME(S) ARE YOU PLANNING TO TACKLE OVER THE HOLIDAYS?

Yes, sad but true. We play at work, at home, and even at Aunt Jennie's after pie.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Super Mario Galaxy is at the top of my list. It keeps looking better and better every time I see it. I'll be investing a lot of time in Contra 4, as well.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

I'm awful at Guitar Hero III, so it'll take me most of the winter to unlock all the songs. Besides, my little cousins can jam out with me in multiplayer.

GEORGE SINFIELD

I will boldly (and gladly) go to Super Mario Galaxy this holiday season. I haven't been this excited for a platformer since Mario went 3-D on the N64.

STEVE THOMASON

After finally getting a chance to play NiGHTS this month, my anticipation for that game is through the roof. It's coming along beautifully.

SCOTT PELLAND

I've been teaching my toddler twins how to play Super Mario Bros. on Virtual Console. (Hey, it's never too early.) But Daddy wants to spend time on the latest and greatest: Super Mario Galaxy!

PETE MICHAUD

Metroid Prime 3 is at the top of my holiday "to do" list. But I'm definitely going to have to wait until Santa upgrades my TV set. Widescreen, 480p perfection, baby.

CHRIS SLATE

Wii Sports. Oh, I'll play as much Mario, Smash, and Phantom Hourglass as I can, but with family over for the Holidays, my days are sure to be filled with hours upon hours of tennis and bowling. These people never tire or hunger—they're Wii Sports machines!

BRETT E.

Considering the amount of time that I sunk into Super Smash Bros. Melee, finally getting my hands on Brawl this December is going to be the highlight of my Wii-gaming year.

KUROTSUCHI
2P
ORIHIME
3P
GANJU
4P
RESTRICT JUMP
TARGET ALL ENEMIES
LEVEL 1
LOWER
ALL ENEMIES

BLEACH: THE BLADE OF FATE (DS)

BLEACH: THE BLADE OF FATE

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **TREASURE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

It's common sense that a fighting-game adaptation of an animated series should be more button-masher-friendly than combo-crammed—the better to attract followers of the show who aren't fighting savants. So how does a legendary hard-core-game developer like Treasure approach mainstream anime Bleach? They have it both ways. You can trigger an elaborate attack by using the usual string of button presses (the hard way) or by tapping an icon on the touch screen (the ridiculously easy way). Some strategy comes into play in the use of stat-enhancing Spirit Cards, but the initial run through the show-inspired storyline is a breeze with or without boosts, even in cases in which the enemies outnumber you. Still, players looking for a challenge should fear not. The roll of the credits is just the beginning. There are 22 additional episodes and multiplayer options aplenty (up to four combatants, single-card download play, and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection-enabled sessions). Even if the word "bleach" makes you think more cleanser than cartoon, Blade of Fate will appeal to any fan of well-executed, feature-heavy fighters. —**GEORGE S.**

TRIGGER HAPPY

HARD CORPS

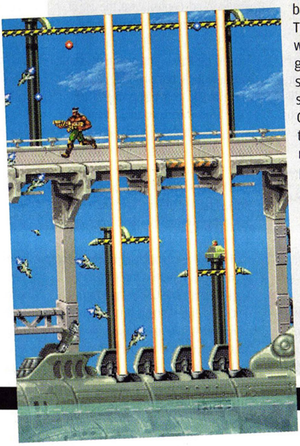
CONTRA 4

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Developer WayForward has been responsible for some cool games (including Shantae and Sigma Star Saga), but frankly, I'm shocked at just how well they've nailed Contra. This is a franchise that has a pretty awful track record when put in the hands of western developers (see Contra: Legacy of War and C: The Contra Adventure), but Contra 4 captures the look and feel of Konami's seminal action series perfectly. It's intense, fast-paced, and *hard*. This is not a game you can breeze through in one sitting, and since there's no saving your progress, you'll have to start over from the beginning when you run out of continues. But in classic Contra fashion, everything is pattern-based, and you'll steadily progress further and further with practice until stages that once seemed impossible fall like a house of cards to your mad skills. As long as you go into it with the right mind-set (and a bit of patience), it's immensely satisfying.

That wouldn't be the case were it not for the rock-solid controls and great level design. There are lots of really cool set pieces sprinkled throughout the game (like riding a giant rocket as it lifts off) to keep things fresh, and each stage culminates with a suitably badass multiphase boss battle. The game also looks fantastic, with meticulously detailed backgrounds and big multijointed sprites. A lively soundtrack (with some nice cues from the original Contra), lots of great bonus content, and a two-player co-op mode round out a pretty superb package. My only major complaint is that the blind spot between screens leads to some frustrating deaths, especially during stages with lots of vertical movement. Otherwise, as long as you're open to its old-school approach, Contra 4 stands as one of the year's best pure action titles. —**STEVE T.**



GEOMS: 200
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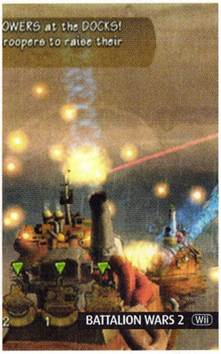
350
325

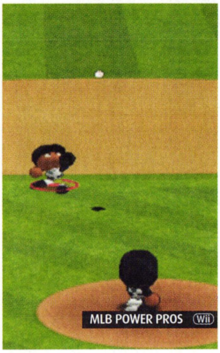
GEOMETRY WARS (Wii)



BATTALION WARS 2 (Wii)

BODY
ARM L
ARM R
LEGS
Atk

FRONT MISSION (DS)



MLB POWER PROS (Wii)

GEOMETRY WARS: GALAXIES

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Sierra**
DEVELOPER: **Kuju**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Wii fans envious of their Xbox Live Arcade-playing cousins finally have something to crow about thanks to Geometry Wars: Galaxies. Building on the already excellent Asteroids-esque concept, Galaxies takes the Geometry Wars' gameplay and style and goes absolutely nuts with it. Aiming via Wii-remote gestures works well—subtle gestures offer smooth and accurate targeting. (Galaxies supports the Classic controller, as well, but we actually preferred the remote over the dual analog controls.) Each planet you visit has its own rules and parameters, but the color-coding system that identifies these rules isn't very clear. Additionally, the action can turn monotonous after a while—there's only so much one can do with 2-D polygons, after all—but the inclusion of drones with creative AI adds a good measure of variety. Galaxies also makes exceptional use of the Wii's connectivity features—you can download both single-player and multiplayer modes to your DS, plus post your top Wii scores to online leaderboards. —**Chris Sh.**

BATTALION WARS 2

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Kuju**
ESRB: **Teen**

There isn't really any other franchise like Battalion Wars. The blend of in-the-trenches action-shooter and real-time strategy genres creates an unarguably fresh experience. Battalion Wars 2 builds on what its GameCube predecessor began by telling a more intricate story and adding new vehicles to diversify gameplay. At times the story feels too intricate—spanning 200 years and featuring six armies, you can often lose track of who the good guys are. The campy, almost nonchalant view of war is also disarming, to say the least. But the plot does a great job of incorporating new strategic elements at a smooth pace—for at least the first half of the game, each new mission weaves in a new military unit (subs are really fun to navigate) or a new type of objective (such as protect the base, rescue the prisoners). With so much to take in, the difficulty level from mission to mission can be a little erratic, however.

The series' transition to the Wii has produced mixed results. One thing is for sure: the developers have been able to get more graphically from the system—better explosions, nice-looking water effects, and well-drawn cinematic sequences add a luster that the GCN game lacked. Control-wise, the use of the pointer has made targeting the enemy much easier—if you can see it, you can destroy it. The pointer is accurate and quick, but a limiting camera prevents you from being able to look directly overhead, meaning planes can strafe you but you can't target them back. Gesture-based controls work to varied effectiveness, as well—jostling the nunchuk to make infantry dodge attacks works fine, but tilting the remote to adjust the elevation when you're piloting a plane feels stiff and slow.

The online multiplayer modes via Wi-Fi Connection come in three flavors; Assault mode and Co-Op mode are quick and entertaining, but the more-prolonged battles of Skirmish mode are more likely to hold people's attention. —**Chris Sh.**

FRONT MISSION

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Square Enix**
DEVELOPER: **Square Enix**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

A mainstay on the Super Famicom in the '90s, Square's turn-based-strategy series Front Mission sees its first North American release on a Nintendo system (Front Missions 3 and 4 have been released on PlayStation formats) with a remake of the franchise's first title. The game is like a stark, futuristic Advance Wars without the happy combatants and vehicle variety. Both allies and enemies drive walking tanklike Wanzers, with customized payloads. When you hit an enemy (either from long distance or from an adjacent square), you can damage its arms or legs (knocking out its weapons or mobility, respectively) or its body (putting the vehicle out of commission). Unfortunately, there's no way to target a particular enemy part or to skip the animation sequence that shows every attack (as there is in the Advance Wars games). The battles are sufficiently strategic—weapon choice and troop positioning (through touch control) figure strongly into the outcome—but they can also be quite tedious by 2007 standards, even when set at top speed—you could spend more than an hour in a single scrimmage. The Advance Wars games have long battles as well, but that's because both you and your enemies can create new units mid battle. In Front Mission, the units are limited (but powerful) so it takes a lot of firepower to knock each one out. Your forces can get even stronger by gaining experience points. You can also refit them between battles using purchased or salvaged parts. If you need cash, you can enter battles in an arena. The venue also serves as a location for multiplayer duels. The game's story is simple but well told, and all of the participants have a lot of dramatic things to say. You can fight on either side of the conflict, but the selection of one side offers much more of a challenge than the other. The graphics haven't changed much since the game appeared on the Super Famicom. The grid squares are just a tad small for the DS screens and it can be difficult to tell which units are yours and which ones belong to your enemies. Still, if you're looking for solid, old-school strategizing, you need look no farther than Front Mission. —**George S.**

MLB POWER PROS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **2K Sports**
DEVELOPER: **Konami**
ESRB: **Everyone**

MLB Power Pros proves that looks can indeed be deceiving. Beneath the game's cartoony exterior lies an honest-to-goodness baseball sim with a heck of a lot of depth. You can manage just about everything, from a pitcher's role in the bullpen (long reliever, situational lefty, etc.) to each player's individual practice regimen. And for that rare breed of geek (such as myself) who's both a hardcore baseball junkie and RPG fanatic, the game's Success mode lets you create a player and guide his quest from college ball to the big show. That includes not only honing his skills, but finding a part-time job, interacting with friends, and courting potential love interests. Unfortunately, for all of its cool options and play modes, Power Pros fails to hit it out of the park because the on-field gameplay is disappointingly simplistic and suffers from lackluster controls. Maybe next year. —**Steve T.**

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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Cartoon Violence

Wii™

NINTENDO DS™

BANDAI NAMCO™ Games

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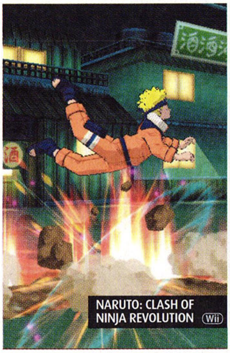
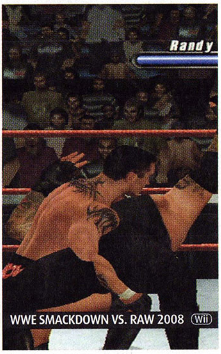

NARUTO: CLASH OF NINJA REVOLUTION (Wii)



WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008 (Wii)

NARUTO: CLASH OF NINJA REVOLUTION

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **TOMY**
DEVELOPER: **EIGHTING**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Fighting games are still a rare breed on Wii, so it's tough to complain about such an energetic brawler. The battles are as crazy as ever with Naruto and his hyperactive buddies teleporting all over the arena, blasting Chakra attacks and flinging shuriken at each other, but it's so familiar that only the biggest fans will want to don the Hidden Leaf headbands once again. There were two Naruto fighters for GameCube just last year, both with pretty much the same graphics, same music, same everything. And since they both still play on a Wii, this latest version is basically a roster update. There are new minigames and a handful of other added features, but they're extremely basic, like usable rocks and crates in the battle arena.

While this is still a solid game, the formula's starting to get stale. Oh, and use the Classic Controller; it's more responsive than the remote's limited motion control. —**BRETT E.**

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008

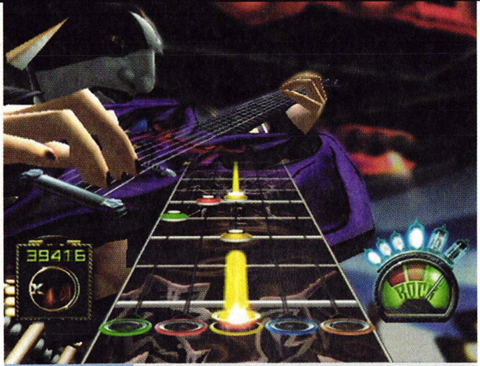
RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
ESRB: **TEEN**

The Wii version of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 steps into the squared circle with one goal in mind: to take the title of the most accessible, arcadelike wrestling game around. In that regard it succeeds; anyone can jump in and start grappling thanks to simple controls and a robust roster of more than 50 WWE superstars, divas, and legends. The game is at its best when you're triggering advanced situation-specific moves in which you mimic the real-life actions you're performing (such as taunts, mounted punches, and lifting and dropping a foe on a barricade). The bulk of strikes, holds, and grapple moves don't pull you into the action quite as much, but they get the job done—at least for a while.

Unfortunately, accessibility has been achieved at the expense of depth. There aren't very many moves to go around, so most of the characters feel the same, and the action gets repetitive faster than in the typical wrestling game. Furthermore, a lot of the gameplay could have used more fine-tuning; automatic running strikes (achieved by attacking from a distance) usually miss, constantly waggling the controller to stand up isn't particularly fun, and the countering system is based too heavily on guesswork. And where are all the cool match types like ladder matches and Hell in a Cell? Gimmick matches seem like they'd work great with the controls, but a meager five match types are provided here.

On the other hand, the custom-character editor is solid, and the choose-your-own-adventure-style career mode is fun and unique (although it would have benefited from superstar voiceovers and more-substantial story elements). Hopefully Yuke's will take the lessons learned here and come back with a more substantial offering next time—after all, every champion's gotta start somewhere. —**CHRIS H.**



LIVE! TONIGHT!

SOLD OUT

GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **NEVERSOFT**
ESRB: **TEEN**

After spending some serious shred time with the latest installment of Guitar Hero, I can firmly declare that if I could buy only one new game this holiday season, it would definitely be Guitar Hero III. Why? Maybe it's that I'm not a rock star, but each time I strap the plastic guitar around my neck I feel like I am. If you're like me, where game nights at home are magically transformed into the main stage at Coachella, then this is the substantial update you've been waiting for. The bundled guitar controller is not only a little meatier than its predecessors, but it's also wireless. For those who value stage presence, this is a big bonus; it allows for hassle-free living-room rocking—since it uses the Wii remote (nestled into a cubby in the guitar peripheral), there's no swapping batteries between accessories. As for the game, it's more of the same; which in this case is awesome. If you're unfamiliar with the series, here goes: it's essentially a rhythm game. Colored dots scroll by onscreen and you try to tap the fret buttons that correspond to the dot colors, while strumming to the tempo of the music. What strengthens this latest addition are the new Nintendo WFC and Co-Op Career modes. The all new Battle mode plays a bit like a fighting game, and in Career mode you'll end up dueling legendary rockers head-to-head. The song selection is excellent, with plenty of the original recordings being used in place of covers. The Rolling Stones' "Paint it Black," Weezer's "My Name Is Jonas," and the Guns n' Roses classic "Welcome to the Jungle" stand out from the crowd. Guitar Hero III isn't without its share of limitations; as in the past, once you've unlocked every song, you're basically done. For my money, though, thanks to its strong song lineup and wireless rock capabilities—it's the perfect progression for the series. —**PETE M.**

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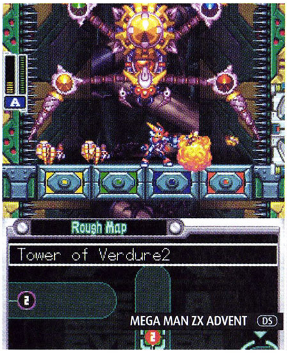
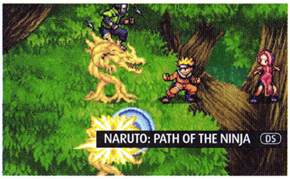
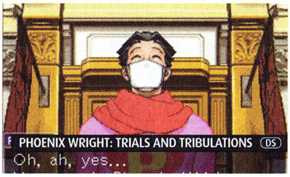
ROCK



MEGA MAN ZX ADVENT (DS)



NARUTO: PATH OF THE NINJA (DS)



PHOENIX WRIGHT: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS (DS)

MEGA MAN ZX ADVENT

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Capcom**
DEVELOPER: **Inti Creates**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Mega Man ZX Advent is the second offering in the ZX series for DS; it follows the exploits of either Grey or Ashe, who gains the power of Biometal Model A and the ability to transform into the eight Pseudoroid bosses once those bosses have been defeated. Vent and Aile from the original ZX return as allies, and baddies Pandora and Prometheus are back plotting the downfall of our heroes. Additional Biometal Models acquired during the game—such as Model ZX—will give you a huge variety of attacks and moves. Excellent anime story scenes link the action stages and feature extensive use of voices. In addition, there are minigames and several multiplayer options to give Advent longer legs. The touch screen functionality is still limited, and navigating the data and map screens can be awkward, but these are minor complaints. As devotees will tell you, platform action doesn't get much better than what Mega Man dishes out, and Mega Man ZX Advent lives up to that reputation. —**Scott P.**

NARUTO: PATH OF THE NINJA

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Tomy**
DEVELOPER: **TOSE**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Although Path of the Ninja is a pretty basic RPG, it does a nice job of immersing Naruto fans into the world of the wildly popular anime. The game covers the first 80 episodes of the show and includes nearly every character. Naruto newbies are welcome, but series fans will definitely get more out of the experience.

The game doesn't push the DS; the graphics are so-so, the top screen isn't used for anything special, and the Control Pad usually works better than stylus control. On the plus side, battles are speedy and never feel too repetitive. Even the menu screens pop in and out quickly, so it always seems like you're making good progress.

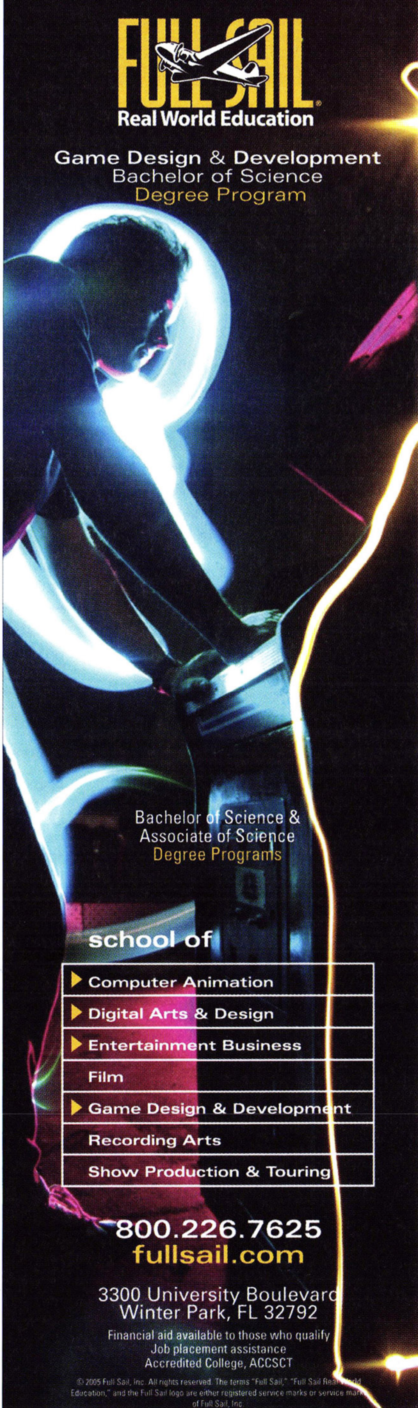
Maybe the game moves too fast, however, since it takes only 10-12 hours to beat—way too short for an RPG. But for serious Naruto fans—or for players new to RPGs—the time that it does offer is well-spent. —**Chris Sl.**

PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Capcom**
DEVELOPER: **Capcom**
ESRB: **Teen**

Phoenix Wright lays down the law for the third time in two years, and the outcome is no different from before: we've got another excellent DS graphic-text adventure on our hands. If you weren't into the comedic point-and-click courtroom-based proceedings of previous Ace Attorney games, Trials and Tribulations probably won't change your mind, but if you like the thought of exploring crime scenes, conversing with witnesses, tearing apart testimonies, and presenting evidence (complete with voice-based interaction), Phoenix's latest delivers in a big way. Although the opening episode is a little lacking in the logic and characterization departments, the cases quickly become deep, complex, and very intriguing. Playing as Phoenix's mentor, Mia, adds an interesting twist to the formula, and the writing is quite good (in spite of a handful of typos). It'd be a crime for fans of the genre to pass up Trials and Tribulations. —**Chris H.**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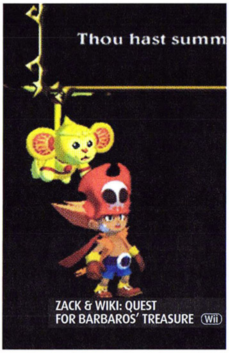
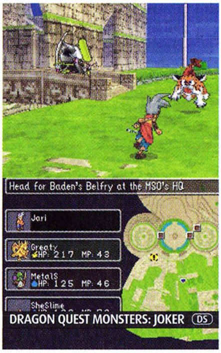
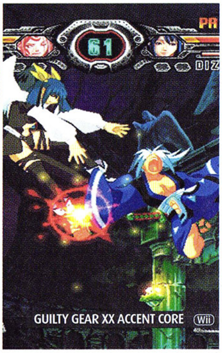


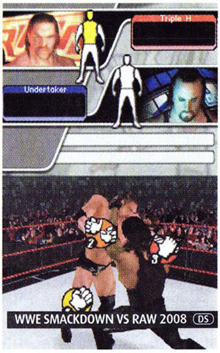
ZACK & WIKI: QUEST FOR BARBAROS' TREASURE (Wii)



DRAGON QUEST MONSTERS: JOKER (DS)



GUILTY GEAR XX ACCENT CORE (Wii)



WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008 (DS)

ZACK & WIKI: QUEST FOR BARBAROS' TREASURE

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
ESRB: EVERYONE

The point-and-click adventure has gone the way of the dodo in recent years, so when one as engaging as Capcom's Zack & Wiki comes along, it's cause for celebration. Combining clever use of the Wii remote with some positively brilliant puzzle design, this pirate-themed gem will keep you hooked from start to finish. Each level unfolds in a completely different manner (the variety is astounding), and piecing it all together comes with a great sense of satisfaction. Though you'll be scratching the old noggin with some regularity, the puzzles are never so esoteric as to leave you feeling cheated. The game also has charm to burn, with an energetic sense of humor and an appealing visual style reminiscent of The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker. It's one of the Wii's best-looking titles, not due to any outstanding technical achievements, but because a lot of care obviously went into creating a very complete aesthetic. The animation is especially fantastic; I would sometimes send poor Zack to his demise intentionally just to see the hilariously awesome death sequences. At 20-plus hours, the adventure is plenty long, and it never, ever drags. There's tons of extra stuff to do, as well, including a music game that has you ringing a bell to classic Capcom tunes.

It concerns me that Zack & Wiki has been saddled with a name that won't do it any favors at retail. The game truly deserves to be a big hit, and I'd love to see a sequel some day. Hopefully Wii owners (particularly our wise, insightful readers) can look past the lame moniker and embrace one of the system's most creative, entertaining titles. —STEVE T.

DRAGON QUEST MONSTERS: JOKER

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: ARMOR PROJECT/BIRD STUDIO/SQUARE ENIX
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker is not quite a Pokémon pretender. After all, the Dragon Quest series has its own two decades of turn-based fighting to draw from, and the title's 200 creatures are slightly fiercer than Jigglypuff and company. Yet the parallels are undeniable: A boy strikes out on his own with only the ability to collect and control monsters to help him rise through the ranks of a mysterious competition. And not only do his monsters align themselves to a Pokémonesque "rock, paper, scissors" circle of dominance, but two monsters can mate to make a third variety (as they do in the Pokémon titles). Well, if it ain't broke.... Still, there is much to recommend the game: a 3-D graphics engine that pushes the hardware's limits, customizable monster development, and just about the best touch-and-button-based interface for the DS yet, making the battles as long or short as you want them to be. The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection-enabled Wildcard World Cup gives the game a chance to achieve a multiplayer groundswell similar to that of its like-minded predecessor. —GEORGE S.

GUILTY GEAR XX ACCENT CORE

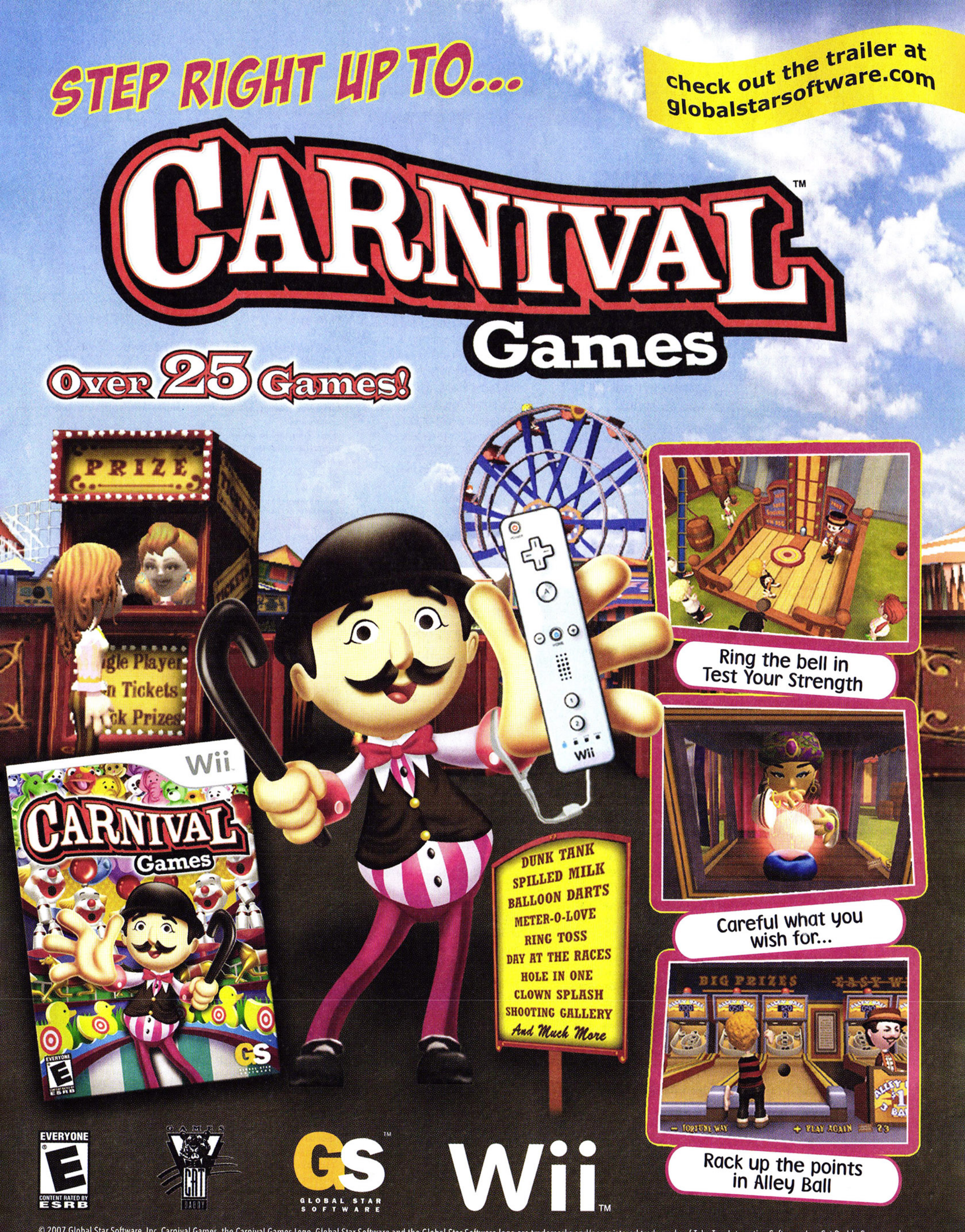
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: AKSYS GAMES
DEVELOPER: ARC SYSTEM WORKS
ESRB: TEEN

Play Guilty Gear XX Accent Core with a GameCube or Classic controller, and you'll be treated to 2-D one-on-one fighting at its finest—beautifully animated, amazingly deep, and with more technique than the average gamer can comprehend. It's not wildly different from previous Guilty Gear XX iterations (none of which came to Nintendo systems), but it's packed with fun in the form of a diverse cast of fighters, a wide array of special moves, and a rockin' soundtrack. Even casual gamers who don't know the difference between a False Roman Cancel and a Force Break attack will be able to jump in and play thanks to the motion-based remote-and-nunchuk control configuration. The nontraditional controls aren't for hard-core fans of the genre, but if you've been intimidated by the complexity of fighting games, the accessibility of Accent Core will put those worries to rest. —CHRIS H.

ALSO THIS MONTH

A unique touch-screen-inspired interface put you in the action in THQ's **WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008** for DS. Once you've entered the squared ring, you'll choose moves from a set of three context-sensitive icons, then quickly follow onscreen instructions to perform the move using your stylus.... Brilliant game design make the DS version of Sierra Entertainment's **Geometry Wars: Galaxies** just as compelling as the space shooter's Wii version, and if you own both, you'll unlock additional goodies.... In **MySims** for DS, you'll find more socializing and less building than in the game's Wii cousin.... Naruto and DBZ aren't the only anime-inspired fighting games on Wii. Sega's **Bleach: Shattered Blade** is big on motion-controlled swordplay.... LucasArts brings **Thrillville: Off the Rails** to both Wii and DS, putting players in the combined role of theme-park owner and rollercoaster designer.... **LEGO *Star Wars*: The Complete Saga** features scenes and characters from all six films, and Wii-wielding lightsaber action.... Wii Sports Boxing gave Wii owners a taste of the sweet science, but XSEED brings the main course with **Victorious Boxers: Revolution**, which features dual-fisted (remote and nunchuk) controls.... New 3-D, motion-controlled Wii-mixes of games such as Pac'N Roll, Galaga, Gator Panic, Rally-X, and Pac-Motos make up **Namco Museum Remix** for Wii.... The on-again off-again saga of Rockstar's **Manhunt 2** for Wii is on again. Talk about insanity! Hands-on violence and disturbing themes landed the game a Mature rating from the ESRB.... Less controversial and more fun for everyone, **Rockstar Games Presents Table Tennis** is a natural for Wii. It's ping-pong without a silly story and Christopher Walken.... But for those who prefer silly stories and Christopher Walken with their ping-pong, Destination Software offers **Balls of Fury**, based on the recent film.... Serious sports fans should take a look at **FIFA 08** for Wii. It includes FreeMotion and EA Sports Family Play controls so even soccer newbies will get a kick out of the action and in three minigames. Pros will head online for bragging rights.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[ARCHIVE]

DS IS DOUBLE STRONG

This month's new archive listings are supercharged with some truly amazing DS games, such as the instant classics Sonic Rush Adventure (9.0) and The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass (9.5). These are games that every red-blooded DS owner should carry with them at all times, unless they are really, *really* focused on lowering their brain age. The swingin' DK Jungle Climber (8.0) and the quirky charmer Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol (8.5) are two more recent additions to the DS can't-miss list. Play these games or trade in your stylus!

REVIEWER NOTES

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS

Drew's review of The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass last month was spot on, but the lengthy discussion about traditional Zelda gaming elements may have confused casual readers. In fact, in many ways Phantom Hourglass breaks new ground for the series—for instance, given the ability to write notes, players can tackle more complex puzzles than ever before. —Scott P.

>BRAIN AGE 2

It's hard not to become obsessed with Brain Age 2. My girlfriend and I are constantly trying to outdo one another when it comes to our ages and times. Is it the 40-hour epic? No. But it is a ton of fun.

—Pete M.

SIMCITY DS

You'd think that for as long as SimCity has been kicking around, the formula would be pretty much down pat. Alas, the DS version is about as half-baked as it gets. The touch-screen should theoretically be an advantage for sim games, but SimCity relies too much on it, filling the screen with small icons and letting the DS's regular buttons sit idle. SimCity is still a solid sim, but this translation does it a disservice. —Chris Sh.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

Wii

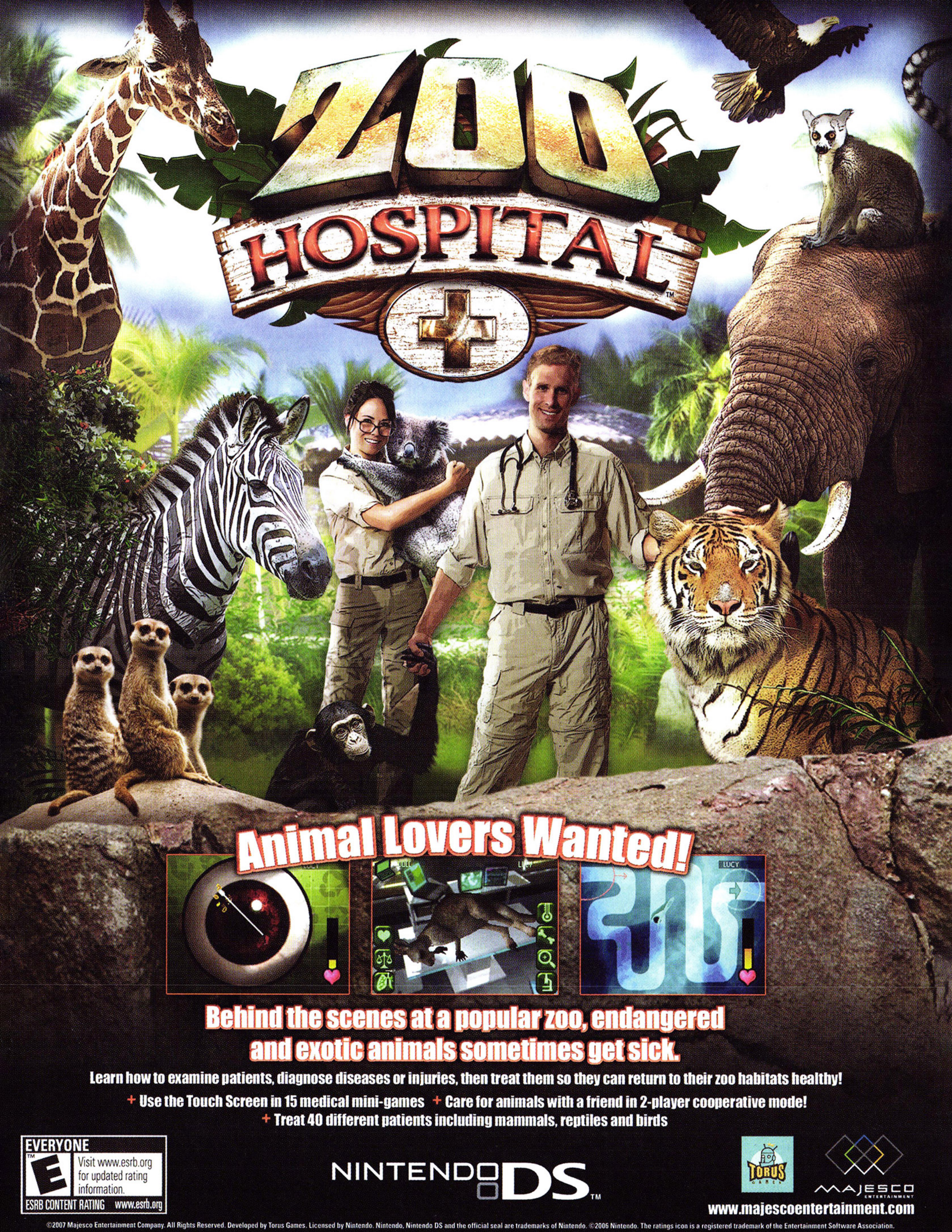
TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Alien Syndrome	6.0	Sega	220	T
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Barnyard	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Bigs	6.0	2K Sports	218	E
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	216	E10+
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Boogie	5.5	Electronic Arts	220	E10+
Brunswick Pro Bowling	6.0	Crave	219	E
Bust-a-Move Bash!	6.5	Majesco	217	E
Call of Duty 3	6.5	Activision	211	T
Carnival Games	7.0	Global Star	220	E
Cars	N/A	THQ	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	7.0	Buena Vista	212	E10+
Cooking Mama: Cook Off	7.5	Majesco	216	E
Cosmic Family	N/A	Ubisoft	215	E
Crash of the Titans	6.5	Sierra	221	E10+
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	4.0	Crave	220	E
Dewy's Adventure	7.0	Konami	221	E
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	7.0	Atari	211	T
Dance Dance Rev: Hottest Party	8.0	Konami	221	E10+
Donkey Kong: Barrel Blast	6.5	Nintendo	221	E
Driver: Parallel Lines	5.0	Ubisoft	219	M
Elebits	7.5	Konami	212	E
Escape from Bug Island!	3.5	Eidos	217	M
Excite Truck	8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Far Cry: Vengeance	4.0	Ubisoft	212	M
The Godfather: Blackhand Edition	8.0	Electronic Arts	216	M
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
GT Pro Series	5.0	Ubisoft	211	E
Happy Feet	4.5	Midway	211	E
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	7.0	Electronic Arts	218	E10+
Heatseeker	7.5	Codemasters	215	T
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	Sierra	212	E10+
Kororinpa: Marble Mania	7.0	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
Legend of the Dragon	5.5	The Game Factory	218	T
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	211	T
Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal	3.5	WB Games	221	E10+
• Madden NFL 08	8.0	Electronic Arts	220	E
Mario Party 8	7.5	Nintendo	217	E
• Mario Strikers Charged	8.5	Next Level Games	219	E10+
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	8.0	Activision	211	T
Medal of Honor: Vanguard	6.0	Electronic Arts	217	T
Meet the Robinsons	6.5	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Mercury Meltdown Revolution	6.0	Ignition	221	E
Metal Slug Anthology	8.0	SNK Playmore USA	211	T
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption	10	Nintendo	220	T
Monster 4x4: World Circuit	6.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	8.0	Midway	217	M
MySims	7.0	Electronic Arts	221	E
Need for Speed: Carbon	6.0	Electronic Arts	212	E10+
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E10+
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	4.5	Disney Interactive	217	T
• Pokémon Battle Revolution	6.5	Nintendo	218	E
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	211	E10+
Rapala Tournament Fishing	N/A	Activision	212	E
Ratatouille	7.5	THQ	218	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Red Steel	8.0	Ubisoft	211	T
Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition	9.0	Capcom	218	M
Scarface: The World Is Yours	7.5	Sierra	218	M
Sonic and the Secret Rings	8.5	Sega	214	E
Spider-Man 3	6.0	Activision	217	T
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	7.0	THQ	211	E
SSX Blur	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
Super Paper Mario	9.5	Nintendo	216	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Super Swing Golf	7.5	Tecmo	212	E
Surf's Up	6.0	Ubisoft	217	E10+
Tamagotchi: Party On!	2.5	Namco Bandai	217	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	8.0	Electronic Arts	221	E
TMNT	5.0	Ubisoft	215	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	6.0	Ubisoft	211	M
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	212	E10+
Transformers	5.5	Activision	219	T
Trauma Center: Second Opinion	8.5	Atlus	211	T
WarioWare: Smooth Moves	9.0	Nintendo	212	E
Wii Play	7.0	Nintendo	213	E
Wii Sports	8.0, 8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Wing Island	5.5	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions	N/A	Activision	212	T

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Avatar: The Last Airbender	7.0	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	211	E10+
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
FIFA 07	8.0	Electronic Arts	210	E
Flushed Away	6.5	D3PA	210	E
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	6.5	Midway	210	E10+
Happy Feet	N/A	Midway	211	E
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	212	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	7.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	T
Need For Speed: Carbon	7.5	Electronic Arts	211	E10+
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Radio Allergy	5.0	0~3	215	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	6.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	8.5	THQ	210	E
TMNT	N/A	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	4.5	Ubisoft	210	M
Tomb Raider: Legend	7.5	Eidos	211	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	6.5	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	T
• Bomberman Land Touch!	7.0	Atlus	211	E
Brain Boost: Beta Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Brain Boost: Gamma Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Brothers In Arms DS	9.0	Ubisoft	218	T
Cake Mania	5.5	Majesco	216	E
Cartoon Network Racing	N/A	The Game Factory	213	E
• Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	9.0	Konami	211	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Charlotte's Web	6.0	Sega	211	E
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	8.5	Nintendo	221	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	6.5	Buena Vista	210	E
Children of Mana	6.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Code Lyoko	7.0	The Game Factory	218	E10+
Cookie & Cream	6.5	Agetec	217	E
• Custom Robo Arena	7.5	Nintendo	215	E10+
Death Jr. And The Science Fair of Doom	5.0	Konami	217	E10+
• Diddy Kong Racing DS	7.5	Nintendo	213	E
• Digimon World DS	N/A	Namco Bandai	212	E
Diner Dash: Sizzle & Serve	6.5	Eidos	217	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Attack of the Dark Dragon	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E



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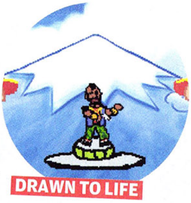
Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
DK Jungle Climber	8.0	Nintendo	221	E
Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru densetsu	4.0	Atari	217	E
Drawn to Life	7.5	THQ	221	E
Densetsu	4.0	Atari	217	E
Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle	7.5	Koei	219	E10+
Elite Beat Agents	9.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	T
Etrian Odyssey	7.0	Atlus	217	T
F-24 Stealth Fighter	3.5	Majesco	215	E10+
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2.0	2K Games	218	E10+
FIFA 08	8.0	Electronic Arts	221	E
• Final Fantasy III	8.0	Square Enix	211	E10+
• Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales	7.0	Square Enix	216	E
Flipper Critters	4.5	Ignition Entertainment	218	E
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Fossil League D.T.C.	N/A	D3PA	214	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+
Fullmetal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy	7.0	Destineer	212	T
• Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game	7.0	Destineer	219	T
Garfield's Nightmare	7.0	The Game Factory	220	E
Glory Days 2: Brotherhood of Men	6.0	Eidos	218	E10+
Gunpey DS	6.5	Namco BAndai	210	E
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	7.0	Electronic Arts	218	E10+
• Heroes of Mana	6.5	Square Enix	219	E10+
Hoshigami Remix	6.0	Aksys Games	218	E
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	8.0	Nintendo	213	T
Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel	6.0	Namco Bandai	213	E10+
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	6.5	Atlus	213	E10+
Justice League Heroes	3.0	Warner Bros.Interactive	210	E10+
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	N/A	Buena Vista	214	E10+
Kirby: Squeak Squad	7.5	Nintendo	212	E
Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits	7.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	9.5	Nintendo	221	E
Looney Tunes: Duck Amok	8.5	WB Games	221	E
Lost in Blue 2	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
• Luminous Arc	8.0	Atlus	219	T
Lunar Knights	8.0	Konami	213	E10+
Madden NFL 08	7.5	Electronic Arts	220	E
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	N/A	Namco Bandai	210	E10+
Magical Starsign	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
• Marvel Trading Card Game	4.0	Konami	213	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
• Mega Man Star Force	7.5	Capcom	220	E
Meteos: Disney Magic	7.5	Buena Vista	214	E
Micro Machines V4	N/A	Codemasters	211	E
Monster Bomber	N/A	Majesco	212	E
My Frogger: Toy Trials	N/A	Konami	211	E
Nacho Libre	7.0	Majesco	210	E10+
Namco Museum DS	8.0	Namco Bandai	221	E
Naruto: Ninja Council 3	6.0	Tomy	217	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nervous Brickdown	7.0	Eidos	219	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Operation: Vietnam	8.0	Majesco	220	T
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Pet Alien	8.0	The Game Factory	219	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	9.0	Capcom	212	T
• Picross DS	8.0	Nintendo	219	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	7.0	Disney Interactive	217	E10+
• Planet Puzzle League	8.5	Nintendo	217	E
• Pogo Island	7.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
• Pokémon Diamond/Pearl	9.0	Nintendo	216	E
Pokémon Ranger	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Prism: Light the Way	8.5	Eidos	219	E
Professional Fisherman's Tour: Northern Hemisphere	5.0	UFO Interactive	219	E
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	4.0	D3PA	215	E10+
Quickspot	5.5	Namco Bandai	214	E10+
• Race Driver: Create & Race	7.5	Codemasters	219	T
Rafa Nadal Tennis	N/A	Codemasters	213	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E
• Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	7.0	Natsume	219	E
Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who?	6.5	THQ	210	E
The Settlers	5.0	Ubisoft	217	E
Shrek The Third	7.0	Activision	217	E
SimCity DS	8.0	Electronic Arts	218	E
The Sims 2 Pets	5.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SNK Vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	7.0	SNK Playmore	215	T
Sonic Rush Adventure	9.0	Sega	221	E
• Spectrobes	8.0	Buena Vista	214	E
Spider-Man 3	7.0	Activision	217	E10+
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	6.0	Activision	212	E10+
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	5.5	Bethesda	210	E
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	7.0	Ubisoft	212	E10+
Steel Horizon	4.5	Konami	214	E10+
Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2	N/A	Namco Bandai	211	E
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	N/A	Buena Vista	210	E
Theme Park	6.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	8.5	Electronic Arts	221	E
Time Ace	6.5	Konami	216	E10+
TMNT	5.5	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	4.5	Eidos	210	T
• Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Touch Detective	6.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Touch Detective 2 ½	6.5	Atlus	221	E
Touch The Dead	5.5	Eidos	217	M
• TouchMaster	8.0	Midway	219	E
• Transformers: Autobots	6.0	Activision	219	E10+
• Transformers: Decepticons	6.0	Activision	219	E10+
Trioncube	5.5	Namco Bandai	213	E
Wario: Master of Disguise	6.5	Nintendo	214	E10+
The Wild West	3.5	Majesco	220	E10+
• Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	6.5	Konami	213	E
Worms: Open Warfare 2	7.5	THQ	221	E10+
Xiaolin Showdown	5.0	Konami	212	E
Yoshi's Island DS	8.0	Nintendo	211	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Spirit Caller	N/A	Konami	213	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2007	N/A	Konami	215	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	210	E
Back to Stone	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	214	E
Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!	6.5	Atlus	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
Final Fantasy V Advance	8.5	Nintendo	210	E
Final Fantasy VI Advance	9.5	Nintendo	213	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	N/A	Crave Entertainment	213	E
Ghost Rider	N/A	2K Games	213	T
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Justic League Heroes: The Flash	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E10+
Mazes of Fate	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	213	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	5.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Polarium Advance	N/A	Atlus	212	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	6.0	Sega	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	8.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	7.0	Atlus	211	T
TMNT	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Yggdra Union	7.5	Atlus	211	T



DRAWN TO LIFE

Drawn to Life might not be on par with Mario or Sonic in the platforming department, but when it comes to its creation aspect, the game is untouchable. Drawn to Life's character-, weapon-, and item-creation tools can keep you busy for hours, and there's essentially no limit to what you can make. You have to admit: fashioning a hero after Mr. T or Optimus Prime is pretty sweet. —**Chris H.**

>ELITE BEAT AGENTS

Even if you don't usually play music games, Elite Beat Agents' infectious charm will put a smile on your face. Don't miss out on one of the true system-defining DS games.
—**Chris Sl.**

LUMINOUS ARC

I'm a little surprised at the beating Luminous Arc took from certain outlets. Granted, the game doesn't do anything revolutionary, but it's a solid strategy RPG with some nice production values and a likeable cast of characters. Like I said in my review, it's not going to convert you if you're not a fan of the genre, but the tactically inclined should get a lot of enjoyment from it. —**Steve T.**

It's all about the game – and how you play it.

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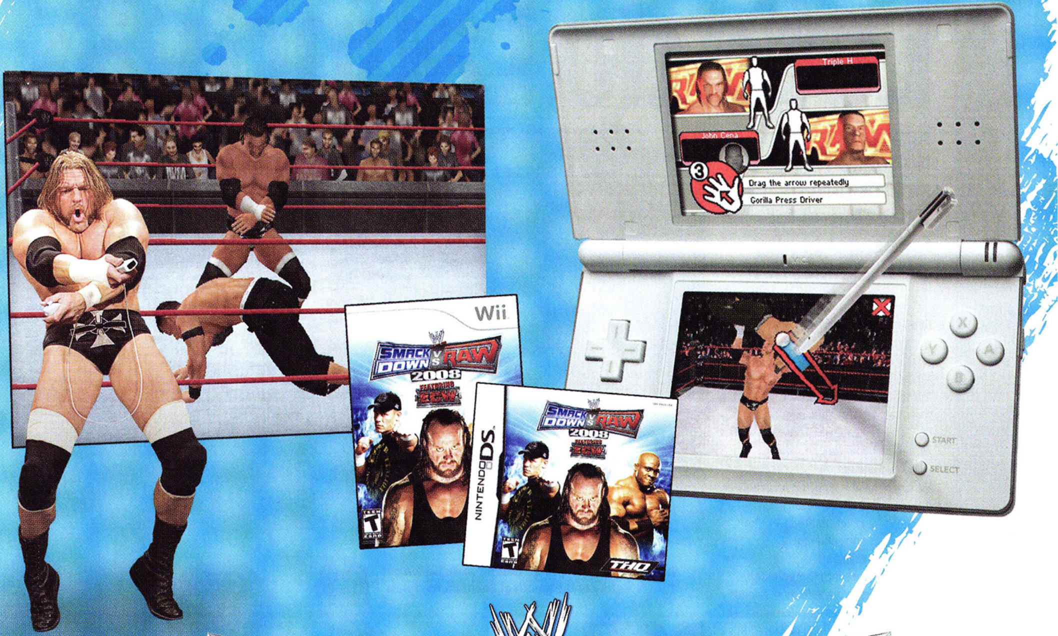
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John Cena
3
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Gorilla Press Driver
NINTENDO DS
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SELECT
THQ

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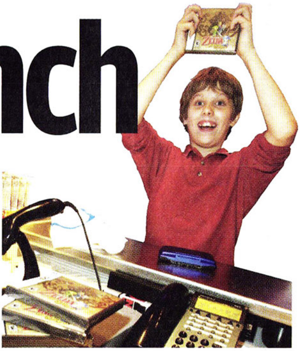
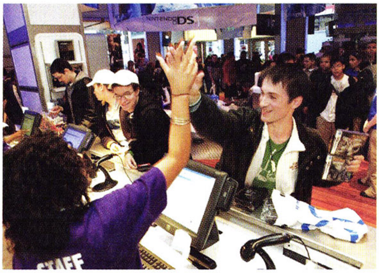
COMMUNITY

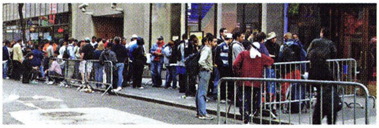
EVENTS

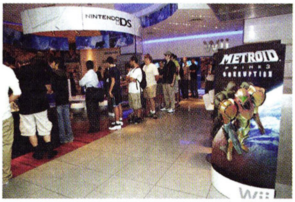
Let's do Launch



New York's Nintendo World store is turning into party central for fans eager to play the big games first







In a city known for its trendy restaurants and exclusive clubs, no place is hotter these days than Nintendo World in New York's famed Rockefeller Plaza. The one-of-a-kind store has recently seen one major new game release after another, and with them come the thousands of fans who line up to get their copies first. Here, a big game launch is an event—a full-on party with contests, prizes, costumes, quizzes, multiplayer gaming tournaments, and more.

These release parties have turned the store into Nintendo fan headquarters, a place to meet friends and make new ones as you celebrate the long-awaited arrival of Nintendo's next great game. Most recently, Nintendo World hosted events for the release of Metroid Prime 3 and The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, and a couple more big bashes are just around the corner: November 12th for Super Mario Galaxy and December 3rd for Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

With the Wii and Nintendo DS as hot as they are these days, hopefully more stores across the country will follow Nintendo World's lead and throw great launch parties of their own. If you happen to attend one, be sure to write in and tell us all about it! —CHRIS SL.

Nintendo WORLD

Julian K. (New York) celebrates his costume contest victory at the launch of Phantom Hourglass.

Nice suit, Link, but the back of the line is right over there.

ADVERTISEMENT

READER REVIEW

you.

GAMER OF THE WEEK

Name: Ted Krinshaw

Age: 15

Hometown: Tallahassee, Florida

PROS: InverteBOTS rocks! I recommend being the king scorpion. You get killer claws and one wicked stinger. Definitely the best attack combos.

CONS: The match-ups can get kinda unrealistic. I don't care who you are, an amped-up ant could never take a teched-out tarantula. Game over.

Tom

INVERTEBOTS

So there you sit on your couch, watching your favorite team on TV. You hear a thump, but you're too lazy to crank your head to the window to see. Your dog begins barking. You feel a thump in the ground. Your dog stops barking. Actually where is your dog? Then suddenly a stinger the size of a telephone pole comes crashing though your roof, directly into your mom's best china. You look outside to see a 60-foot robotic scorpion laying waste to your neighborhood. And all you can say is "Sweet."

Enter the InverteBOTS, the newest creation from POWERSOURCE 360. A re-evolution of Rampage, InverteBOTS's premise is simple. If you can grasp it, you can smash it. Set in the not-too-distant future, the world's machines have become modeled after the most resilient organisms on Earth: bugs. Techno-exoskeleton superbugs with the meanest of mechanical mandibles make mayhem on mankind. And you're behind the wheel. Antennas.

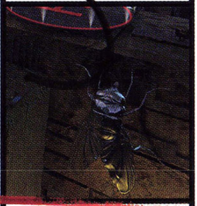
Apart from your pesky opponent sitting next to you, you'll have to fend off ranks of army ants, maniacal mayflies, and one bad mother sucker, the Mosquito.

It has multi-function modes of play, from one- and two-player missions to a free-for-all bug-bashing to a head-to-head torso-twisting roughhouse.

Lifelike graphics [illegible] with just enough computer animation to let you level a city block without feeling too bad. And with independent controlling options that allow you to move each arm and leg individually, it's not all that hard, either.

Check you out at the party last night. Not the friend I went with. We need to talk. -AJ

King Scorpion



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MOD JOB

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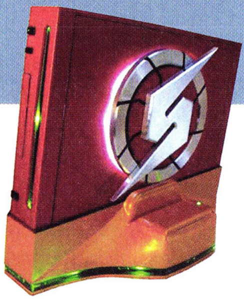
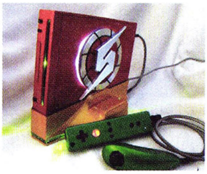
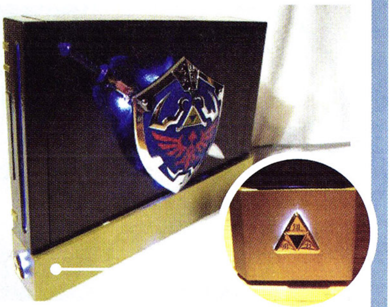
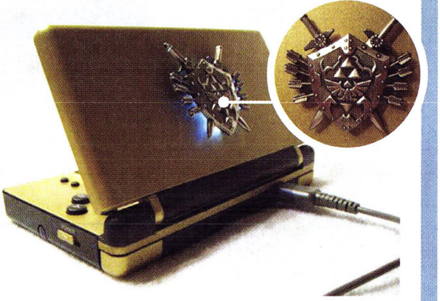


Ramon S. (Georgia) must have an awful lot of patience to spend 80 hours painstakingly customizing a Wii, which is how long it took him to create his "Metroid Wii." We've seen Wii mods before, but nothing else comes close to this. Ramon sold his creation on eBay along with his two previous mods, a Legend of Zelda Wii and a Zelda DS (both shown below). For more photos of Ramon's work, check out http://morpheonmods.blogspot.com/. What beautiful ways to void a warranty! —CHRIS SL.







ANNOUNCEMENT

Where are the Forums?

NINTENDO NSIDER FORUMS

Nintendo NSider Forums Update

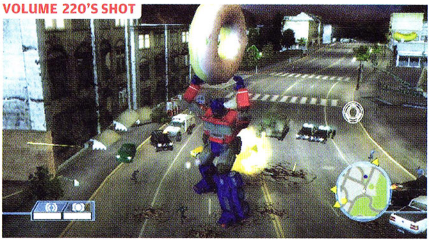
On September 17th, the NSider Forums were closed indefinitely as a prelude to a site-wide overhaul at Nintendo.com. But don't worry! We here at Nintendo Power are working on even bigger plans for an online community that we hope to share with you early next year. —CHRIS SL.

SCREEN TEST

Under the Sea

If robots had a sense of humor, Prime would be laughing himself silly over this month's batch of captions. For this month's new shot, we leave robot and donut violence behind for the tranquil undersea world of Endless Ocean. Zen out, write what comes to mind and email it to us at screentest@futureus.com.

VOLUME 220'S SHOT



"Panic ensues after Optimus Prime gets confused by a patron's request to 'do some donuts in the parking lot.'" —Gibby

"Michael Bay really missed the mark on this one." —mikie

"Where is Javatron when you need him?" —OhioVillans

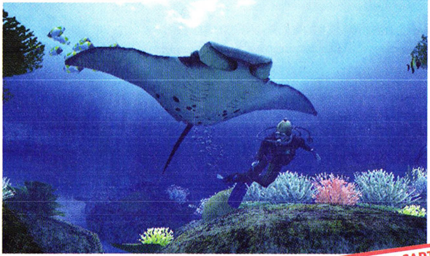
"Homer Simpson, this is the Springfield Police. Put down the donut, and step out of the robot suit." —Robin B.

"Now, all we need is a little coffee . . . and a lot of luck." —Robbie A.

"SPRINKLES?! I hate sprinkles. Bumblebee, you never understood me!" —Anthony H.

"I can't wait to hit Steve T. with this giant donut for giving my game a bad review!" —Kyle M.

THIS MONTH'S SHOT



"Man, fish won't even come *near* me today!"

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Holiday 2007 Vol. 223

NEXT MONTH

You've all been such good little gamers this year that we're bringing you an extra issue of Nintendo Power! Ho! Ho! Ho!

REVIEW PREVIEW

The biggest games of 2007 are finally ready to face NP's frosty (but fair) critics. We'll test-drive Super Mario Galaxy, Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles, Soulcalibur Legends, and many more of the season's hottest titles.

WE'VE GOT THE BEAT

We may have no more musical skill than a marmoset with maracas, but that won't stop us from previewing Sega's Samba de Amigo for Wii!

NEVER SAY FINAL

Was there ever a less-accurate franchise title than Final Fantasy? No, thank goodness. The legacy continues with our inside story on Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates for DS.

AND LOTS OF CHEER!

Surprises big and small await faithful NP readers in the first annual holiday issue, so we recommend watching your mailbox closely.

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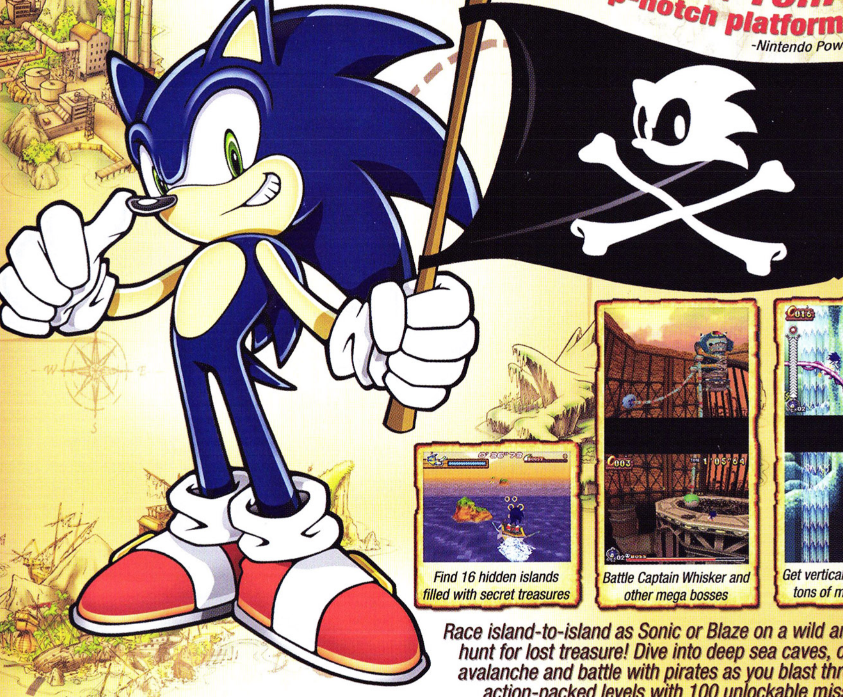

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